



## **43: JESUS IS NOT THE DEVIL! (Luke 11:14-28)**

I've had and still have plenty of struggles in my life against my own sin. When I was in kindergarten, I was the worst kid in my class. In elementary school, I used to constantly pick fights with kids for no particular reason. By Middle School I got into smoking, drinking and porn. By High School I got into drugs, skipping school, lying, not doing any schoolwork, almost failing out of 12th grade, being sexually active, dealing drugs, basically never doing what I was supposed to do, and even more violence than Middle School.

I came to faith in God and eventually faith in Christ, and since then have struggled with plenty of things- swearing, bitterness, being too critical, being judgmental, and having plenty of moments of selfishness, despair, anxiety and more. I'm no "perfect Christian" to be sure. I certainly don't claim to be, and no one who is in their right mind and is honest would do so!

But one early victory I experienced was the pursuit of sexual purity.

In fact, I had victory in this area after going through a sort of agnostic, New-Age "God" conversion, before fully coming to Jesus. Part of it was born out of trauma. A girl that I thought I was in love with and I broke up, and she immediately went off and started sleeping with new guys. I walked in on her in the act. It flipped my wig.

And from there, I went head on into celibacy. I stopped looking at porn altogether even.

And six months after this traumatizing experience of catching my ex girlfriend with another dude, I was dating a girl. She came onto me physically, and out of straight up fear and a growing conviction towards celibacy, I basically rejected her.

And from there, she went around spreading a rumor that I was gay. I mean, how could a guy reject her advances? She was beautiful and appealing to many, and she knew it.

But this really rubbed me raw.

It's not cool to have people say things about you that aren't true. It's a terrible feeling, really. It makes you feel angry and powerless. Take it from me that as a pastor, it happens to me on a different level. The bible calls this "slander".

D. Miall Edwards wrote the following summary of slander;

SLANDER, slan'dēr (subst., דִּבְרָה, dibbāh, "slander"; δῖάβολος, diábolos, "slanderer"; vb. רָגַל, rāghal, "to slink about" as a talebearer, לָשָׁן, lāshan, "to use the tongue," "to slander"; δῖαβάλλω, diabállō, "to calumniate," "to slander"; and other words): Slander (etymologically a doublet of "scandal," from OFr. eselandre, Lat seandalum, "stumbling-block") is an accusation maliciously uttered, with the purpose or effect of damaging the reputation of another. As a rule it is a false charge (Mt 5:11); but it may be a truth circulated insidiously and with a hostile purpose (Dnl 3:8, "brought accusation against," where LXX has diaballō, "slander"; Lk 16:1, the same Gr word). Warnings, condemnations and complaints in reference to this sin are very frequent, both in the OT and NT. Mischievous "tale-bearing" or "whispering" is condemned (Lev 19:16; Ezk 22:9). There are repeated warnings against evil-speaking (as in Ps 34:13; Prov 15:28; Eph 4:31; Col 3:8; Jas 4:11; & 1 Pet 3:10), which is the cause of so much strife between humans (Prov 16:27–30), and which recoils on the speaker himself to his destruction (Ps 101:5; 140:11). False witness is even worse, which is "slander carried into a court of justice," to be condemned and punished (Ex 20:16; Dt 19:16–21; cf Prov 12:17; 14:5, 25; 19:5; 21:28; 24:28). Special cases of slander are when a wife's chastity is falsely impeached by her husband (Dt 22:13–19), and when one slanders a servant to his master (Prov 30:10). Even a land may be slandered as well as persons (Nu 14:36). Slanderers and backbiters are mentioned in some of Paul's darkest catalogues of evildoers (Rom 1:29, 30; 2 Cor 12:20; 2 Tim 3:3). To refrain from slander is an important qualification for citizenship in the theocracy of God (Ps 15:1, 3; 24:3, 4) and for a place in the Christian church (1 Tim 3:11; Tit 2:3). Jesus Himself was the victim of slanders (Mt 11:19) and of false testimony (Mt 27:63). The apostles, too, came in for a full share of it (Acts 24:5 f; 28:22; & 2 Cor 6:8). In the case of Paul, even his central doctrine of justification was "slandrously reported" as if it encouraged immorality (Rom 3:8). The

devil (= “the calumniator”) is represented as the great accuser of God’s people (Rev 12:10), the slanderer par excellence (Job 1:9–11; Zec 3:1).<sup>1</sup>

Starting in Luke 11:14, we see that, following a miracle, Jesus was ruthlessly slandered by some religious people.

Jesus dwelt on the margins in that He knew what it was like to be misspoken of, misunderstood, and maligned. He identified with all the people who had been through a similar experience. Those who were falsely accused were right at home with Jesus! Let’s dig into this powerful text!

**14** Now (Jesus) was driving out a demon that was mute. When the demon came out, the man who had been mute spoke, and the crowds were amazed. **15** But some of them said, “He drives out demons by Beelzebul, the ruler of the demons.” **16** And others, as a test, were demanding of him a sign from heaven. (Luke 11:14-16)

To understand the significance of Jesus’ miraculous work, especially his exorcisms, one must understand 11:14 - 23. The miracle, told in a single verse (v. 14), reflected one of the most significant kinds of activity in Jesus’ ministry. Its importance emerges when one compares it to how the gospel writers present other miracles. Most of them are told with vividness and detail, while reactions to them are only briefly summarized. Here the situation is the opposite, in that the reaction and commentary dominate the account. In other words, this account summarizes the public debate over Jesus’ miraculous work and carries an explanatory significance for all his miracles.<sup>2</sup>

So in this section of Luke, the gentile gospel writer focuses on the response of the people around Jesus to His miracle. We see that Jesus was not well received by everyone. In fact, it could be argued that on plenty of occasions, Jesus was only well received by a minority of people. Even His disciples, who had left everything for Him and loved Him, constantly misunderstood Him.

The issue in Luke 11:14-16 was Jesus’ authority. When he exorcised a demon that was the source of a man’s being mute, the discussion began about the unusual character of Jesus’ ministry.

Two responses to Jesus emerged.

---

<sup>1</sup> D. Miall Edwards, “Slander,” ed. James Orr et al., *The International Standard Bible Encyclopaedia* (Chicago: The Howard-Severance Company, 1915), 2814–2815.

<sup>2</sup> NIV Application Commentary Copyright © 1996 by Darrel L. Bock.

(1) Some assigned his work to Beelzebub. This name, probably originally referring to a pagan god, was applied to Satan, designating him as “Lord of the Flies.” This derisive name indicated a lack of respect for this powerful figure. To some, therefore, Jesus’ power was demonic.

(2) Others preferred to sit on the fence and wait for something more from Jesus. The request for a sign from heaven was vague, given the many acts Jesus had already done. Apparently some type of visible sign involving activity in the heavens was in view.<sup>3</sup>

When he was young, some teachers thought Albert Einstein was dumb because he didn't talk until he was older.<sup>4</sup>

Now Einstein’s accomplishments include developing the theory of general relativity, explaining the photoelectric effect, deriving the mass-energy equivalence formula ( $E=mc^2$ ) which is central to understanding nuclear energy, and contributing significantly to the understanding of Brownian motion, laying the groundwork for quantum theory through his concept of light as particles, and introducing the concept of a cosmological constant to explain the universe's expansion.<sup>5</sup>

We know all of this about Einstein in hindsight. We now can look back on his life and easily say that these teachers who thought Einstein was dumb were really the dumb ones!

And we, in hindsight, look back on the accomplishments of Jesus- that He first helped to create the heavens and the earth, then miraculously was born to earth of a virgin fully God and fully human. He lived a completely sinless life. He performed miracles. He willingly laid His life down and died a brutal death, becoming a substitute for our sins, so that God looks down on what He did on the cross and sees His perfect obedience and sacrifice instead of our sins, thereby pardoning us. We believe that upon death, Jesus literally took on Beelzebub, the devil and his demons in the pit of hell, and was victorious over them. He then was buried, and rose from the dead after three days, appearing to hundreds of His disciples. He ascended to heaven. He sent the Holy Spirit down into His disciples as promised. He sits at the right hand of God, and will one day return as a conquering King to judge the quick and the dead and sons and daughters of humankind, literally restoring the Kingdom of Heaven to Earth for all time, and He will rule over the same for all time.

---

<sup>3</sup> NIV Application Commentary Copyright © 1996 by Darrel L. Bock.

<sup>4</sup> <https://www.beaconcollege.edu/never-accept-failure-learning-from-einstein/>

<sup>5</sup> <https://www.britannica.com/biography/Albert-Einstein>

So to think of people calling Jesus the devil may seem absurd to us now who believe in Him. But it happened all the time while He was on earth. And these words always came out of the mouths of unrepentant, hypocritical religious people! Be careful y'all!

And then, as usual, there were those who didn't necessarily condemn Jesus, but out of a hesitation to give Him what He deserved- being their all and their very lives, they wanted to test Jesus. They "were demanding of him a sign from heaven". "Give us one more miracle Jesus, just one more, and then maybe we'll consider believing!"

Have you seen Jesus deliver someone out of addiction? Restore a marriage? Breathe purpose and life into someone? Physically heal someone? Drive demons out of someone? Psychologically, mentally, or emotionally heal someone? Have you experienced anything like this?

Well, then the response should be to give Him your all! He is proving that He is God. Why test Him when He is who He is? Why test Him when He's already proven who He is?

Questioning prevents people from making a commitment to Jesus.<sup>6</sup> It's a cop-out. It's an excuse. It's a way **out** of yielding **all** to Him as we should!

But Jesus sees right through us. He sees through people, their slander, their excuses, their resistance, and their sin...

*17 Knowing their thoughts, (Jesus) told them, "Every kingdom divided against itself is headed for destruction, and a house divided against itself falls. 18 If Satan also is divided against himself, how will his kingdom stand? For you say I drive out demons by Beelzebul. 19 And if I drive out demons by Beelzebul, by whom do your sons drive them out? For this reason they will be your judges. 20 If I drive out demons by the finger of God, then the kingdom of God has come upon you. 21 When a strong man, fully armed, guards his estate, his possessions are secure. 22 But when one stronger than he attacks and overpowers him, he takes from him all his weapons he trusted in, and divides up his plunder. 23 Anyone who is not with me is against me, and anyone who does not gather with me scatters. (Luke 11:17-23)*

Jesus knew the speculation about him and immediately, publicly addressed it. He didn't act passive aggressively, and He was no coward. He rejected the connection to Satan on a simple premise. If Satan's goal was to destroy and Jesus was reversing the effects of that destruction by healing, then how could one tie Jesus' work to the archdemon?

---

<sup>6</sup> NIV Application Commentary Copyright © 1996 by Darrel L. Bock.

That would mean a house divided and a kingdom ready to fall. Satan's kingdom could not stand if Jesus was driving out the demons by this power.<sup>7</sup>

People are so **critical**. We love to critique that which we are jealous of, or simply don't understand. Have you ever looked at the comment threads beneath some of the posts from the biggest social media platform pages in Akron, Ohio? So many people in our city are stinking **nasty** to other people. It's just disgusting. It just proves that everyone loves to be a critic. But being a critic is cowardly. Actually doing good is much more courageous.

And who did more good than Jesus. Who was more courageous than our Lord? But what did He get in return? Critique. Constantly. Malicious critique sometimes. And for no good reason.

Jesus next issued one of the most crucial statements of his ministry: "But if I drive out demons by the finger of God, then the kingdom of God has come upon you." Jesus outlined two possibilities for explaining what was taking place. Either he worked by satanic power or through divine connections. There was no third option, no neutral ground. His use of the phrase "the finger of God" — which occurred in the biblical account of the Exodus (Ex. 8:19), another great moment of divine activity — showed that God was **directly** involved in history through Jesus with the powerful touch of his grace.<sup>8</sup>

Yes, Jesus's slanderous critics were saying that He was doing the work of the devil, and Jesus responded by saying, "no, actually, the devil is my enemy, and I am hog-tying him, smacking him around, plundering him, and reversing his effects on people. Quite literally you've got it 100% wrong."

How can we know for sure that we're doing the work of Jesus? I certainly struggle with this. I'm a human being. I'm messed up. How can I know I'm really on the side of Christ?

Jesus said Himself in Matt. 7:15-20;

**15** *"Be on your guard against false prophets who come to you in sheep's clothing but inwardly are ravaging wolves. 16 You'll recognize them by their fruit. Are grapes gathered from thornbushes or figs from thistles? 17 In the same way, every good tree produces good fruit, but a bad tree produces bad fruit. 18 A good tree can't produce bad*

---

<sup>7</sup> NIV Application Commentary Copyright © 1996 by Darrel L. Bock.

<sup>8</sup> NIV Application Commentary Copyright © 1996 by Darrel L. Bock.

*fruit; neither can a bad tree produce good fruit. 19 Every tree that doesn't produce good fruit is cut down and thrown into the fire. 20 So you'll recognize them by their fruit.*

Put quite simply, you know a tree by its fruit. And what's the fruit of the Spirit?

*22 But the fruit of the Spirit is love, joy, peace, patience, kindness, goodness, faithfulness, 23 gentleness, and self-control. The law is not against such things. 24 Now those who belong to Christ Jesus have crucified the flesh with its passions and desires. 25 If we live by the Spirit, let us also keep in step with the Spirit. 26 Let us not become conceited, provoking one another, envying one another. (Gal. 5:22-26)*

We know that Christ is working through us when people experience His love, joy, peace, patience, kindness, goodness, faithfulness, gentleness, and self-control **through** us **despite** us! That's the key right there! Keep on seeking Him, yielding fully to Him, and letting Him work through you!

Jesus also talked in Luke 11:17-23 about God's kingdom coming. This was also significant. What was at stake in Jesus' ministry was a cosmic battle displaying the right to rule. Like a great war, the combatants were facing off with everything at stake. The promise of the kingdom was one of the great promises of the Old Testament. God's promised agent would rule as the vicegerent of God, restoring the presence of righteousness on the earth. Jesus' exorcisms signaled its arrival.<sup>9</sup>

Please understand that you know the Kingdom of Jesus and the power of the Holy Spirit has shown up whenever the devil is getting kicked in the teeth! Whenever hatred stops, addiction ceases, despair is broken, fear is cast out, dysfunction is exposed and reversed, apathy is shaken up, passion is reignited, joy comes burning like a flame, love, forgiveness, restoration, and reconciliation reign. When anxiety ceases, when desperation turns into hope, when demons shut up and run away, when these things happen, the Kingdom of God has come!

And remember what Jesus says in Luke 11:23, "Anyone who is not with me is against me, and anyone who does not gather with me scatters."

We have cheapened the gospel and call to discipleship so much in our culture that we've created a whole swath, a whole generation of converts, religious people who want nothing to do with actually being disciples of Jesus. This is a real detractor for the watching world. There are so many people out there who would be interested in Christ, but the biggest barrier in their way is people who say His Name with their lips yet have

---

<sup>9</sup> NIV Application Commentary Copyright © 1996 by Darrel L. Bock.



hearts far from Him! (Isa. 29:13) Maybe that's why God is so thoroughly pruning the Church in our western, post COVID context.<sup>10</sup>

But notice what Jesus says. He gives an all or nothing call here. One can't be on the fence about giving everything to Jesus. You're either 100% with Him, or 100% against Him. There's no in-between.

This doesn't mean perfect obedience is possible! We're all sinners that need perpetual repentance, change and growth. If we say, "We have not sinned," we make him a liar, and his word is not in us. (1 John 1:10). But conversely, we can't have some hidden, unrepentant sin that we engage in regularly and be His disciple. We gotta get real about it, confess it, and invite Jesus to remove and heal it! "The one who says, "I have come to know him," and yet doesn't keep his commands, is **also** a liar, and the truth is not in him." (1 John 2:4)

What's your little sin that you won't let God touch and won't let anybody in on? Confess it now to God! Find trusted people to confess to! I've got a huddle I'm part of twice a month that is all pastoral leaders, and we all always have things to confess. All human beings who aren't Jesus are always struggling! We all need safe spaces to work our junk out!

If you're a nominal Christian. If you're an unrepentant hypocrite, if you're a religious person like these religious people who were falsely accusing and slandering Jesus, there's not much hope for you. The devil has already got a hold of you. Cut it out. Legalistic Christians echo the spirit of these religious people falsely accusing Jesus. Any legalistic Christian I've ever known always has some unrepentant sin that they won't let go of, won't confess fully to God, and definitely won't fully confess to people because they want people to have a **fake** view of who they are and think they're a real nice little Christian boy or girl. They're functional narcissists who are some of the most self-**un**aware people on earth. Don't become one of them!

And it's this unrepentance towards whatever hidden sin they've got that just **bleeds out** into their entire lives. Let me warn you right now- if you're unrepentant in **one area** of your life, you'll be unrepentant in **general**. You'll lose your ability to see your own sin. You'll lose a clear view of how you impact others and how they experience you. You'll be a real pain in the rectum to have to live with and put up with! Don't go down that road!

---

<sup>10</sup> [For more on this, please read "The Great DeChurching" by Davis & Graham.](#)



Confess that hidden sin now! Get right with the Lord! Follow Him again! Renew your love and commitment to Him! Renew your gratefulness to Him! Apologize to the people you've harmed!

If you're a disciple of Jesus it's all or nothing! There's no alternative! There's no "middle ground"! You must be 100% in, and the devil's demons will constantly jack with your flesh. The enemy will use people, relationships, situations, circumstances, difficulties, stress, and trials to try and derail you. Be sober-minded, be alert. Your adversary the devil is prowling around like a roaring lion, looking for anyone he can devour. (1 Pet 5:8) Stay on the alert! Wake up! Don't take a spiritual nap while demons spiritually plunder your flesh!

And how exactly do demons plunder and overtake someone? People in our religious culture think that if they have the right theology, the right politics, the right morality, and the right outward behaviors then they'll be just fine and dandy, and the devil will leave them alone, what suckers we are! Jesus taught;

**24** *"When an unclean spirit comes out of a person, it roams through waterless places looking for rest, and not finding rest, it then says, 'I'll go back to my house that I came from.'* **25** *Returning, it finds the house swept and put in order.* **26** *Then it goes and brings seven other spirits more evil than itself, and they enter and settle down there. As a result, that person's last condition is worse than the first."* (Luke 11:24-26)

The first remark (vv. 24 - 26) reported of an exorcism where the demon departed a house, but nothing was put in the house to replace it. The house was clean but still left empty. So the demon decided to return and brought with him seven other spirits more wicked than himself. They reentered the house, making the situation far worse than it was before the exorcism.

These verses are about **spiritual response**. If God's grace frees someone from the presence of evil temporarily, or at least offers to do so, and then a refusal to respond comes, a dangerous situation emerges. The "house" is left clean, and the door remains open for those forces to return more determined than ever to live there. The end result is then worse than the first. Revelation missed becomes one step closer to being left in evil hands. Refusing to respond to God's grace is not a matter of being **neutral**, but of **remaining** in **destructive hands**.<sup>11</sup>

Listen- unrepentant religious hypocrites, nominal people, and worldly people all have one thing in common- they're fodder for demonic influence.

---

<sup>11</sup> NIV Application Commentary Copyright © 1996 by Darrel L. Bock.

And one can even experience a touch of God, act like their house is all “tidied up”, and then end up worse off than before. We must stay alert and aware of the enemy’s schemes. (2 Cor 2:11; Eph 6:11) It’s exactly what Jesus was talking about in Matt. 13:20-21;

*20 And the (seed of the gospel) sown on rocky ground—this is one who hears the word and immediately receives it with joy. 21 But he has no root and is short-lived. When distress or persecution comes because of the word, immediately he falls away.*

I meet addicts all of the time that have a scare, then they get real sober, and they want to live a perfect Christian life, go to rehab meetings every day, get a job, get responsible, volunteer at a non profit, and volunteer at Church and all of a sudden be this perfect Christian, but then one thing goes south in their life and they’re back on the bottle, they’re back on the crack pipe. Some of them even become enemies of the gospel and pollutants to the Christian community. Some of them become slanderers themselves. Be aware of them. Sure, help them when the Lord leads. But don’t be duped, and don’t be sucked into their dramatic orbit.

***And for those of you in and out of that rocky soil- BE CAREFUL!!!*** Take things a step at a time! Don’t ever think because Jesus has touched your life that you somehow are always gonna hold it all together! Testing will come! This is what will prove whether you’re a real disciple of Jesus or not!

We conclude in the text;

*27 As (Jesus) was saying these things, a woman from the crowd raised her voice and said to him, “Blessed is the womb that bore you and the one who nursed you!” 28 He said, “Rather, blessed are those who hear the word of God and keep it.” (Luke 11:27-28)*

This was obviously a short exchange that concluded with a beatitude (vv. 27 - 28). The possibility of falling into a worse state caused someone to change the subject and offer praise for those who cared for Jesus. The woman’s blessing of Jesus’ mother attempted to honor his family. It seemed nice enough. It was not unusual to honor a mother in that culture by the accomplishments of her sons (Gen. 49:25; Prov. 23:24 - 25).

But Jesus transformed the remark into another opportunity to declare where real blessing in life resided — in those who heard and obeyed God’s Word. Like the previous illustration, Jesus was focusing on the cruciality of receiving that Word. Richness and fullness of life were not a matter of biological or social origin, but relating well to the Lord of the universe (cf. 8:19 - 21).<sup>12</sup>

---

<sup>12</sup> NIV Application Commentary Copyright © 1996 by Darrel L. Bock.

People's family members, friends, religious upbringings, and neighborhoods of origin don't make them "good". God is good, all the time, and God's goodness residing in someone is the **real** goodness within them.

It's also a dismissal of the goodness of God to flatter someone and put them on a human pillar. That's a quick way **out** of **actually** obeying what God is calling us to do, and a distraction from what our **real** focus should be. It appears that this woman wanted to quickly fawn on Jesus and put Him on a pedestal. It was nice what she was saying, but it wasn't the point. Jesus recalibrated the statement back to what's important.

The point isn't to put certain ministry leaders on a pedestal- if you're in Akron, Ohio, Knute Larson, Jeff Bogue, Noelle Beck, Mike Castelli, and whoever else may be your all time heroes. Maybe you put me on a pedestal, some have. And like Duane Crabbs once told me, "if someone puts me on a pedestal, I'll quickly knock myself off of it!" But we shouldn't be idolizing anyone except the risen Christ (1 Cor 1).

It is right to have Jesus on the pedestal of our lives for sure, after all He is the Son of God. It's right to worship Jesus. But the point of following Jesus is to "hear the word of God and keep it". That's why Jesus came. He came to create disciples, not converts! Not religious people! Not unrepentant hypocrites! Not nominal Christians! **Disciples!**

May we hear the word of God and live it Streetlight fam! May we be living testaments to the glory and grace of our great God! He is our all! He is our everything! He deserves all the praise! Bless His Name! Hallelujah!

## DISCUSSION QUESTIONS:

1. Have you ever been "slandered" or gossiped about? How did this make you feel? Have you ever slandered or gossiped about someone? Did it work out in your favor or against you?
2. Do you feel that following Jesus is an all or nothing thing? Or do you think one can partially follow Jesus?
3. Have you ever struggled with putting someone on a pedestal? Did this person ever let you down? What does God have to say about this?