

Luke Study 3 - Freedom from Evil, Freedom to Obey 11:14-54

Introduction

Have you ever gotten rid of one bad habit, only to replace it with another?

It's a story that's common to lots of us. We give up smoking, only to take up overeating so we have something to do with our hands. We give up social media, only to fill up the extra hours with Netflix. We all know that, to really kick a bad habit, it's not enough just to get rid of it; you need to replace it with something better.

This principle is behind what Jesus teaches us in the first half of today's section. Jesus has come to bring in the kingdom of God. That means freeing people from the evil things that control them (in this case, a demon) (11:14-23). But it also means replacing those things with something better to control them: the word of God (11:24-28). Only once people can hear and obey God can they be truly free. So, they should listen to God! (11:29-32) This is how their lives will be filled with light! (11:33-36) This is the first thing Jesus teaches us in this section.

Read Luke 11:14-23

1. What does Jesus do? (v.14a)
2. How does the crowd react? (vv.14b-16)
3. How does Jesus answer their accusation? (vv.17-19)
4. What does what Jesus has done really point towards? (v.20-23)
5. Not many of us have been possessed by demons. But the Bible does say that, before we became believers, all of us *'followed the ways of this world and of the ruler of the kingdom of the air, the spirit who is now at work in those who are disobedient,'* that is, the devil (Eph 2:2). What do you think about that? How does this shed new light on what Jesus has done for us?

Read Luke 11:24-28

6. What does Jesus warn about if the demon-possessed person doesn't get something better to fill them once the demon is gone? (vv.24-26)
7. What is that better thing? (vv.27-28)
8. What does that look like for us in practice?

Read Luke 11:29-36

9. What is the 'sign of Jonah'?

10. What is the 'something greater than Jonah' that is now here?
11. What do you think Jesus is trying to tell the crowds to do?
12. Jesus tells a parable in vv.33-36. Without getting bogged down in the details, what do you think it means?
13. What does all this mean for us?

We'll only be truly blessed when we can listen to God and obey him. So it stands to reason, then, that anyone who *stops* us from listening to God will be in big trouble! That's where Luke takes us in 11:37-54.

Read Luke 11:37-44

14. Jesus unleashes on a Pharisee who invites him to a meal. If you had to sum up what Jesus criticises the Pharisees for, what would it be?
15. How might we see similar behaviours in Christian leaders, that we ought therefore avoid?

Read Luke 11:45-54

16. Jesus now turns his anger onto the Pharisees' legal advisers, the experts in the law. If you had to sum up what Jesus criticises them for, what would it be?
17. How might we see similar behaviours in Christian leaders, that we ought therefore avoid?

There are different ways leaders can stop people from hearing the word of God. Some can focus so much of people's attention on them that they give the impression faith is all about 'you.' Others can pile up rules for people to obey and hence take away grace. Either way, they are blocking people from knowing God, and Jesus hates that. It's good for us also to know how people can block us from God, and to avoid them.