

Luke 11:33 - 36

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This is our third week now considering Jesus argument and refutation to the religious and national leaders of Israel who are in their final stages of rejection of Him as messiah.

You'll recall that Jesus had cast a demon out of a man, a deaf and dumb demon, and that immediately after that demon taking flight by Jesus command, the dumb man spoke. And the masses, the regular folks, people like us in fly-over land, were amazed at the power and authority of Jesus.

He has just done something that only God can do. He has authoritative command and control over the spirit world, and not just the fallen evil spirits either.

In Matthew 26:53, after Peter had whacked off the ear of one of the assailants, Jesus says "Put your sword away Peter, 53 *Are you not aware that I can call on My Father, and He will at once put at My disposal more than twelve legions of angels?*

On Jesus command, the Father would send more than 12 legions of angels. That was significantly more than the highest number they had which was 10000. A legion was a thousand, so the highest number is trumped. 12 legions. And He says more than. And in the old testament, one angel slew 185,000 men.

Just throwing numbers around so that your mind will by rapid mathematical calculation, which I know you all can do, you come up with the number that

Jesus has limitless power. Limitless. At His disposal. The angels are at His beck and call.

Putting one demon to flight and restoring speech to a man who may have never heard or uttered any words is equally easy as commanding enough angels to kill every person on earth. It is the power of God.

And that power on display has panicked the rulers of Israel. They aren't panicked because God is in thier midst. They are panicked that they are losing control over the illiterate masses.

They are the literate. The elite's who are in the know and also in power over the regular folks who they have also called, the accursed. To them, these fly-over land illiterates are not better than being accursed. Forgotten by God.

These accursed, ignorant simpletons are amazed at Jesus miracle. Astounded. To their simple minds, Jesus spoke, a demon took flight, and a man was more than restored. He speaks, who could not previously speak. It's a miracle that is on the order of creation.

God spoke and the worlds were. Jesus spoke and a demon flees. And now astonishment seizes these illiterate folk as the previously demon possessed man who could not speak, his tongue was literally tied, now he speaks.

The rulers in Israel have got a real problem. This isn't the only miracle. This man has walked the width and breadth of Israel doing these miracles. Healing people with creation powered miracles. He restores limbs that never walked, eyes that never saw, tongues that never spoke. He heals every disease.

In fact disease has been eradicated in Israel as the crowds continually bring their poor and disconsolate to Him and He heals them. He creates new body parts out of nothing. He speaks and they are made whole. He prays over a few loaves and fish and feeds thousands. He commands the wind and the sea and they obey. He walks to them in a fierce storm, on top of the water.

How is this happening. Surely only God can speak and create something out of nothing, right? That's what the illiterate common folks are saying. How can this man do these works if God is not with Him? Common sense wins the day.

The rulers are panicked. They're loosing their grasp on the illiterate masses, something that power mongers cannot tolerate. Their answer; He's the devil. Satan can do magic tricks too. We know He isn't God, so our only other choice for this kind of display of supernatural power is, Satan. His source is Satan. He's Satan. Beelzebul the god of the dung. The magot god.

And then they taunt Him. Jesus, do some signs in the sky and then we'll believe. In other words, all the miracles aren't enough, we still need more. Turn the moon to blood. Make a few stars fall to earth. Turn the sun to black. Show us some of the columns of smoke. Fire and brimstone and columns of smoke would do it for us.

This is all on full display for the illiterate masses. We'll believe you're the messiah when you throw a little fire and brimstone and vapor of smoke. Do what Joel and the prophets said you would do when you come. Then we'll believe.

And, I have to say, if it were me, I'm afraid I would have made a smoking hole out of their temple and them just about the time they said that. But Jesus is infinitely patient, with me, and even with these who have sold their very souls to Satan and his kingdom so that they can grasp power to rule over the people.

He gives them four arguments. Satan isn't at war with Satan. That is ludicrous. Their argument is idiotic. Nonsensical, but it's all they've got. Satan is overpowered. Satan is the strong man who is overcome by a stronger force.

Their refusal to see and believe the obvious is a sign of wickedness, and God does not respond to wicked people demanding more signs. The only further sign they will receive is when He rises from the grave after they murder Him.

This level of disbelief in the face of the mountain of evidence is not easy. It's hard work to hold onto your disbelief. This is willful disbelief. They have to work at it. It actually takes effort to be this hard headed, and they are piling wickedness on top of wickedness.

And then finally, this last argument before He moves on to pronouncing woes upon these enemies of God who are in fact the very ones in league with Satan. We'll look at the final argument this morning.

And this is a direct response to their taunting call for signs in the sky. At the root of their taunt is the claim that He is not who He claims to be because He hasn't given them enough proof. All of the miracles that no one else can do or has ever done, ever, since creation, aren't enough proof. He hasn't delivered sufficient proof.

You realize that, right. The only thing that trumps all of the miracles that Jesus has done, is creation itself. That's the only bigger miracle. But that's not enough for these guys? God has a word for that. Wicked dis-belief.

And Jesus is going to argue that the problem isn't the sufficiency of the evidence. The evidence of all of the miracles is overwhelming. The problem is blindness. An atomic flash that would destroy the optical receptors of a normal person, has no effect on someone who is completely blind. Their receptors are broken. It isn't that the light wasn't bright enough, it's that they have no eyes. Blindness.

And this is a frightening and problematic doctrine for many people, because we're going to look in the old testament and discover that the blindness is partly a response to their evil unbelieving hearts . . . by God Himself.

You see the evidence and don't believe and see more evidence and don't believe and the evidence piles up and your dis-belief piles up against it until finally God abandons you and hardens your heart and blinds your eyes so that you cannot ever repent. This is the unforgiveable sin.

Jesus tells them in another place and a different but very similar earlier incident that gazing at all of the evidence that the Holy Spirit has given over and over in all of the miracles and the only thing you can come up with is, the power source is Satan! That is a blasphemy against the Holy Spirit who has brought about the very works of God.

At that point, God paves over your heart and your eyes with thick asphalt. This situation that Jesus is speaking to is the most dangerous thing in the whole Bible. Take all of God's grace, all of God's miracles, all of God's evidence and say Satan did that when actually it was the Spirit of God that did it, and you're done. At that point, there is no remedy.

And that's why at this point, next week, we're going to have to spend a morning looking at the most scathing rebukes in the entire Bible. But for now, let's look at Jesus final argument to these wicked rulers of Israel.

33 "No one, after lighting a lamp, puts it away in a cellar, nor under a peck-measure, but on the lampstand, in order that those who enter may see the light.

These little lamps were about the size of an abalone shell if you had the two parts. They were a flat thing with a hollow interior for the oil and a larger fill hole and another smaller more elevated hole at one end where the wick came out. The wick just lays in the oil and pipes it to the flame. Basically a 1 candle power light.

And Jesus logic is the same as before. Put in the idiom of R. C. Sproul, it is something like; "What's the matter with you people!"

You've got Satan doing battle with Satan, and you've got God hiding his light in a basement. Who does that? What kind of idiot would make that crazy of an argument.

God didn't put the light in a cave and seal it shut. He didn't hide it under a

basket. A peck measure is about the size of an old fashioned laundry basket. God didn't send the light and hide it. That's idiotic at best. Maybe Satanic at worst. Willful dis-belief is satanic.

God put His light on a light stand to give illumination. The problem isn't the illumination, God did that perfectly, the problem is your eyes.

33 "No one, after lighting a lamp, puts it away in a cellar, nor under a peck-measure, but on the lampstand, in order that those who enter may see the light. 34 "The lamp of your body is your eye; when your eye is clear, your whole body also is full of light; but when it is bad, your body also is full of darkness.

Like we said before. A nuclear flash 15 miles away has no effect on a blind person. It's bright enough to damage ordinary eyesight permanently. That's why they handed out those dark glasses for the observers in the 1950's. But a blind guy sitting there that day, doesn't see the flash. It isn't the flash that's the problem, it's the blind eyes.

And Jesus says, there's a spiritual equivalent. Darkness and light are a theme throughout scripture. God dwells in light. Darkness is separation from Him. Judgement is being cast into the outer darkness. Away from God.

This fallen world is in spiritual darkness. The remnants of glory are here to inform every soul. The glory of the creation. The dignity of life. We are fallen, yes, but made in God's image. Within the dignity of being made in God's image is the command to not kill. We are not to destroy life made in God's image. Darkness and light.

And Jesus uses that metaphor of light and darkness to describe himself. He is *the* light. In Isaiah 9

1 But there will be no more gloom for her who was in anguish; in earlier times He treated the land of Zebulun and the land of Naphtali with contempt, but later on He shall make it glorious, by the way of the sea, on the other side

of Jordan, Galilee of the Gentiles.

2 The people who walk in darkness

Will see a great light;

Those who live in a dark land,

The light will shine on them.

Jesus **is** that great light that Isaiah prophesied about. The light is shining brightly. God didn't do it in a cave. In a basement. Under a peck measure. The problem isn't the light. The problem is the eyes.

In scripture the metaphor of light and darkness is used to contrast lost fallen sinners, wandering about in the darkness of sin, as opposed to the spiritually cleansed and awakened ones who have come out of death unto life, who have come out of darkness to spiritual light.

Paul says in Ephesians 5:8

*For you were once darkness, but now you are light **in the Lord**. Walk as children of light,*

Those of us who are hidden in Christ, He in us and we in Him, Paul says we are light. The positional truth and the practical reality both live in that verse.

Positionally, in Christ, I am light because He is light and I am in Him. And then Paul says; walk like who you are. This is your position, live it out.

Peter likewise says; 1 Peter 2:9

*But you are a chosen people, a royal priesthood, a holy nation, a people for God's own possession, to proclaim the virtues of Him who **called you out of darkness into His marvelous light**.*

And there is a sense in both of those attestations that we are light, that in Jesus absence, while He is away, in heaven at the right hand of His father, the light in the world is us. We who belong to Jesus are the light in this world until He comes.

What happens when the church looks just like the world? How does the world perceive any light if we look just the same as them?

Jesus says, if your eye is working, your whole being fills up with light. Spiritual life. We are made alive together with Christ. That quickening from spiritual death transfers us into God's light.

34 “The lamp of your body is your eye; when your eye is clear, your whole body also is full of light; but when it is bad, your body also is full of darkness.

He's not talking about physical eyes and physical sight. He's talking about your soul. Your soul is your spiritual eye. And there are two possibilities. Souls that are receptors of Christ and His light. They let Him in. He fills them up with His light. His life.

And sadly, there are souls which are blind. Dead. Non receptors. *34 “The lamp of your body is your eye; when your eye is clear, your whole body also is full of light; **but when it is bad, your body also is full of darkness.***

35 “Then watch out that the light in you may not be darkness.

This is a call to believe. This is a warning to those who can still see, still hear Him. The receptors are still working. The ears aren't yet deaf. The eyes aren't yet blind. Some in that crowd, that day, could still see, still hear. They hadn't crossed over into full blindness like the pharisees and the leaders of Israel.

Jesus pleads with those who can see and hear; *35 “Then watch out that the light in you may not be darkness. 36 “If therefore your whole body is full of light, with no dark part in it, it shall be wholly illumined, as when the lamp illumines you with its rays.”*

Cross over into the light. Open your heart up and let the light shine in. For those who answer this call, the light fills up every void, every place is illuminated.

Us photographers are more aware of the character of light. Light rays don't go around corners. You'll notice on old cameras that the parts that fit together to make the interior completely dark have doubled 90 degree corners that trap the light and stop it from coming in.

This light that Jesus is speaking metaphorically about doesn't possess that characteristic. When your soul, your spiritual receptor, your spiritual eyes let the light of Jesus in, that light is more like water in His analogy. It fills up the interior. Every void, every corner. The light displaces all darkness. It fills you with life.

That's the invitation for those who aren't blind. For those whose spiritual receptors are not blocked, not blind, not paved over with asphalt.

But what of these pharisees. How is it that they have become completely blind?

In the commissioning of Isaiah in Chapter 6 of the book with his name, God pronounces His judgement on willful dis-belief.

*9 He said, "Go, and tell this people:
'Keep on listening, but do not perceive;
Keep on looking, but do not understand.'*

*10 "Render the hearts of this people insensitive,
Their ears dull,
And their eyes dim,
Otherwise they might see with their eyes,
Hear with their ears,
Understand with their hearts,
And return and be healed."*

*11 Then I said, "Lord, how long?" And He answered,
"Until cities are devastated and without inhabitant,
Houses are without people*

And the land is utterly desolate,

Jesus quotes these words in Matthew 13 when the disciples ask Him why He speaks only in parables.

God judges willful dis-belief with a further hardening of the heart. It's a spiral downward. Willful dis-belief causes judgemental hardening which makes it even harder to believe next time, and so on.

When people love their sin and darkness and choose that instead of light, God gives them over to what they love. God abandons willful sinners to their sin and causes judgemental blindness.

Asaph, the Psalmist writes in Psalm 81 these words from the heart of God Himself;

*10 "I, the LORD, am your God,
Who brought you up from the land of Egypt;
Open your mouth wide and I will fill it.*

*11 "But My people did not listen to My voice,
And Israel did not obey Me.*

*12 "So I gave them over to the stubbornness of their heart,
To walk in their own devices.*

Any time you see those words, I gave them up, I gave them over, you have a pattern of judgement where the people have chosen darkness and God judges them by giving them over to their desires.

You want blindness, I'll give you blindness. You want darkness, I'll give you darkness. God responds to willful evil, willful disbelief, a desire for sin instead of a desire for life with Him. Frightening words.

Isaiah 29:10

For the LORD has poured out on you a spirit of deep sleep; He has shut your eyes, O prophets, and covered your heads, O seers. Paul repeats all of this in Romans chapter 1.

Jesus talks extensively about this phenomenon of willful dis-belief and the resulting judgment of God at length, early in His ministry as He speaks to Nicodemus in Jn. 3

16 *“For God so loved the world, that He gave His only begotten Son, that whoever believes in Him should not perish, but have eternal life. 17 “For God did not send the Son into the world to judge the world, but that the world should be saved through Him. 18 “He who believes in Him is not judged; he who does not believe has been judged already, because he has not believed in the name of the only begotten Son of God. 19 “And this is the judgment, that the light is come into the world, and men loved the darkness rather than the light; for their deeds were evil. 20 “For everyone who does evil hates the light, and does not come to the light, lest his deeds should be exposed. 21 “But he who practices the truth comes to the light, that his deeds may be manifested as having been wrought in God.”*

The evidence is overwhelming. The miracles are overwhelming evidence. Once for all, overwhelming evidence. Written in a book by reliable witnesses. So many reliable witnesses. The record of the miracles that prove Jesus is who He claims to be is our book.

The evidence that will charge the world with it's sin is written once for all, for all time, in this book. The world is guilty because the book is ubiquitous. Everywhere. Easy to obtain. Available.

But Jesus words are just as true today also. Men love their sin. They hate this book. I want to draw this frightening warning of Jesus to a close this week with a current event in our own land.

In Eastern Kentucky, a school locker room had this verse painted up on the wall. *“But the Lord is with me like a mighty warrior,”* Just those 10 words.

No reference about where they came from. Nothing else, just that portion from scripture, somewhere; *“But the Lord is with me like a mighty warrior,”*

No salvation references. Just a quote to lend some sense that there is a higher power who can strengthen and refresh.

But after receiving a complaint from the "Freedom *From* Religion Foundation" the school district painted it out. All gone. The Freedom from Religion foundation has to free us from any distant memory of a God who has any standards what-so-ever!

I was curious. The original story I heard didn't even mention the verse, so I had to dig a bit to even find out what this hideous remembrance of some sky God might even be. *“But the Lord is with me like a mighty warrior”*

Yeah, that would have to go. How hideous. Then I was curious again to find the context where that verse appeared. It's from Jeremiah 20:11. Here's part of the context. See what you think;

The context is that Pashur, the chief priest in the temple took Jeremiah and put him in the stockade at the city gate. Listen to Jeremiah; God's man who Pashhur Persecutes Jeremiah 20:1 - 6

1 When Pashhur the priest, the son of Immer and the chief official in the house of the LORD, heard Jeremiah prophesying these things, 2 he had Jeremiah the prophet beaten and put in the stocks at the Upper Gate of Benjamin, which was by the house of the LORD.

*3 The next day, when Pashhur released Jeremiah from the stocks, Jeremiah said to him, “The LORD does not call you Pashhur, but Magor-missabib. 4 **For this is what the LORD says:** ‘I will make you a terror to yourself and to all your friends. They will fall by the sword of their enemies before your very eyes. And I will hand Judah over to the king of Babylon, and he will carry them away to Babylon and put them to the sword. 5 I will give away all the wealth of this city—all its products and valuables, and all the treasures of the*

kings of Judah—to their enemies. They will plunder them, seize them, and carry them off to Babylon. 6 And you, Pashhur, and all who live in your house, will go into captivity. You will go to Babylon, and there you will die and be buried—you and all your friends to whom you have prophesied these lies.’”

Does anyone think America is going to get off easier than Israel? We can't paint over any remembrance of God fast enough! And we are NOT His chosen people like Israel was.

Go again and refresh your memory in the Book of Romans chapter one. In that chapter there is a sequence of God hardening unbelievers. Beginning in vs. 18 you will find Paul uses that formula of God giving them over three times in succession. Nationally we are at the very end of that succession.

I'll finish this morning with words from Jesus, quoted from the 12th chapter of the book of John;

Vs. 35. *Jesus therefore said to them, "For a little while longer the light is among you, walk while you have the light so the darkness may not overtake you as he who walks in the darkness doesn't know where he goes. While you have the light, believe in the light in order that you may become sons of light."*