

There is no neutral ground with Jesus. We either have to love Him or hate Him. C. S. Lewis is usually credited with the liar, lunatic, lord argument for Christ's divinity. Some of you may have heard this argument. But for those who have not I am going to read the whole quote for you.

"I am trying here to prevent anyone saying the really foolish thing that people often say about Him: I'm ready to accept Jesus as a great moral teacher, but I don't accept his claim to be God. That is the one thing we must not say. A man who was merely a man and said the sort of things Jesus said would not be a great moral teacher. He would either be a lunatic — on the level with the man who says he is a poached egg — or else he would be the Devil of Hell. You must make your choice. Either this man was, and is, the Son of God, or else a madman or something worse. You can shut him up for a fool, you can spit at him and kill him as a demon or you can fall at his feet and call him Lord and God, but let us not come with any patronizing nonsense about his being a great human teacher. He has not left that open to us. He did not intend to. ... Now it seems to me obvious that He was neither a lunatic nor a fiend: and consequently, however strange or terrifying or unlikely it may seem, I have to accept the view that He was and is God." C.S. Lewis in *Mere Christianity*.

Some people like to argue on how good of an argument that is. But this line of argument was not invented by a white 19th Century British Anglican. It was first spoken by a brown homeless Palestinian Jew named Jesus.

This morning we are going to hear from Jesus that there is no neutral ground. We have to make a decision about Jesus. And the consequences of that decision will echo throughout all eternity.

Turn with me to Luke 11:14-36

Point number 1 is our main question: **Are you with Jesus or against Jesus (v. 14-26)?**

This is what all of us must decide.

We have to decide what we believe about Jesus.

Do we really believe that He is God Himself born of a virgin?

Do we believe that His words are the very words of God?
Do we believe that He worked these miracles?
Do we believe that He lived a perfect life?
Do we believe that He died on the cross for our sins and was truly dead?
Do we believe that He rose again?

Are we with Jesus or are we against Jesus?

Jesus says this in verse 23, which is the key verse of our passage

"Whoever is not with me is against me, and whoever does not gather with me scatters."

But why would Jesus say this?

What would lead Him to proclaiming this to the crowd?

Back up to verse 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."

So far it seems great!

We catch up to Jesus after His teaching on prayer to find Him casting out demons.

And this particular demon has made a man mute.

The man has not been able speak for a long time.

But Jesus sends the demon away and now the man is free.

Once again the man speaks.

And the crowd marvels in amazement.

This is something they have done time and time again.

Jesus does a miracle and the people marvel.

But something is about to change.

Something is going to be different in how the crowd reacts.

Because Jesus is no longer just hanging out in Galilee.

Now Jesus is heading towards Jerusalem.

In Luke 9:51, **"Jesus set His face towards Jerusalem."**

He is now heading towards the cross.

He is heading straight towards His death.

And every step He takes that direction will lead to more opposition and conflict.

And we see the first hints of that now.

With how the crowd responds to this miracle.

Verse 15, **"But some of them said, "He casts out demons by Beelzebul, the prince of demons."**

That does not sound like marveling to me.

They do not just reject Jesus as being the Messiah.

They do not just reject Jesus as being their Savior and God.

They do not just say He must be a nice teacher.

They say that He has the power of Satan not God.

Beelzebul is an old name.

It seems to be a name for Satan taken from the old Canaanite god named Baal.

This is the height of insult and mockery.

They attribute the work of Christ to Satan or Canaanite gods.

They believe it is an elaborate act demons are putting on to fool people.

And some still make this objection to Jesus today.

They will not say Jesus is working by the power of Beelzebul.

But they will accuse Jesus' work of being evil.

But they will use different words instead.

They say Jesus is on the wrong side of history.

His words are old fashioned and out of date with our modern world.

They might say religion is the opiate of the masses.

They may say that Christ's teaching on sexuality is harmful and repressive.

They may say that Christ's views are toxic.

The world may not dare to call something demonic.

But they don't hesitate to call it evil.

And Jesus shows how foolish the arguments of the crowd is.

Verse 17, **"Knowing their thoughts, said to them, "Every kingdom divided against itself is laid waste, and a divided household falls. 18 and if Satan is divided against himself, how will his kingdom stand?"**

Jesus wants to examine their accusation logically.

They say that Jesus is casting out demons through the power of Satan. And Jesus just wants to know how that claim makes any kind of sense.

He points out the logic that any divided kingdom will fall.

A nation at civil war with itself will not be strong.

It cannot last.

A football team that is punching each other on the sidelines isn't going to win the game.

A marriage won't last if both people hate each other and want nothing to do with the other person.

Division destroys unity.

And Jesus wants to know how Satan's kingdom works if he gives people power to cast out demons and destroy his kingdoms?

Why would Satan be behind a civil war between demons?

It does not make any sense.

Satan would not give power to somebody to destroy himself.

Their objection to Jesus is illogical.

Their rejection of Jesus in these claims don't make any sense.

But Jesus does not stop there.

Instead he continues to tear apart their argument against Him.

Jesus goes on in verse 19, **"and if I cast out demons by Beelzebub by whom do your sons cast them out? Therefore they will be your judges."**

Who are the sons that Jesus is pointing to?

It seems like Jesus is probably pointing to His own disciples who are sons of Israel.

These disciples that we know from the Gospel of Luke that Jesus has empowered and given His authority to cast out demons. This seems to be something that they have been doing. They came back excited telling Jesus about all the demons that they have cast out and how everyone is marveling.

So Jesus points to them and says what about them? Because no one objected to their casting out demons. No one has said that Jesus is disciples have the power of Satan. But Jesus wants to know if you think I do it by the power of Satan how do they do it?

We even saw in Luke 9:49 that Jesus's disciples found other people. People who were not disciples of Jesus and yet they were casting out demons in the name of Jesus. So people are running around the nation of Israel casting a demons by the power of Jesus in the name of Jesus and Jesus wants to know where does their power come from?

Jesus is trapping them. Because if they say the power comes from Satan then they need to stop all these exorcisms going on everywhere because it's happening in the name of Jesus. Or they would say well you are doing it and Satan's power but they're not even though they're using your power. Which logically doesn't work.

This is why Jesus says they stand as your judges. They are all Witnesses who condemn you because you are rejecting Jesus.

For Jesus doesn't stop there He keeps going. Verse 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 says if I am doing this and the power of God then the kingdom of God is here.

It has approached you it is at your Gates and you need to respond. You have to make a decision do we want in the kingdom of God or do we not?

And His reference of the Finger of God is an important one.

It is a deliberate Choice it is not just a random idea that Jesus had. Can you think of where in scripture the finger of God is mentioned?

Two for me come to mind the first is an exodus chapter 8 verse 19.

Moses is working the plagues on the people of Egypt.

And Pharaoh's magicians are reproducing the plagues.

They're telling Pharaoh don't worry this isn't really the one true God these are just magic tricks and we'll do the same one.

But when the third plague of gnats come suddenly the magicians try to do it and can't.

And they come to pharaoh and they say, **"this is the finger of God."**

Also when the tablets containing the 10 commandments and the law are written by the finger of God.

Jesus is claiming at the same God who gave them the law that they love the same God who saved them from slavery is here and His power is at work.

the question is whether they want to be with Him or if they will be against Him?

Jesus continues in verse 21, **"when a strong man, fully armed, guards his own Palace, his goods are safe; 22 but when was stronger than he attacks him and overcomes him, he takes away his armor in which he trusted and divides his spoil."**

in this story Satan is the strong man.

He is the one who is armed and who guards his territory.

His territory being the people that the demons possess and the places where Satan's strongholds are firm.

But Jesus is the stronger one.
Jesus is the one who attacks the demons not with magic,
Not with His strong carpenter muscles,
Not with complicated rituals.
He is so strong that He conquers demons with a word.
Jesus takes away the demons armor
He gets the spoils and He divides them.
Jesus gives people back their freedom and gives us so much more.

And then people have to choose in verse 23, "**whoever is not with me is against me, and whoever does not gather with me scatters.**"

we all have the choice to make.
Are we with Jesus or are we not with Jesus?
Do we believe Jesus or do we reject him?
You have to make a decision.

There is a sense in which the crowd finally is getting this right.
Cuz they've just been marveling up till now.
But now Jesus wants them to make a decision.
Am I God or am I not?
Are you in the Kingdom that has come upon you or are you rejecting the kingdom?
because you must make a decision.

There is no neutral ground.
You can't put it off until tomorrow.
You can't think that well Jesus is okay I kind of like him there's some stuff
I'm not a fan of.
You are either all in with Jesus or you are against Jesus.

In a 24 He shows the danger of thinking that you can just be agnostic about Jesus.

Verse 24, "**when the unclean Spirit has gone out of a person, it passes through waterless places seeking rest,**"

He means that a demon has been cast out of a person and now he wanders around and desolate places looking for someone else he can possess.

"and finding none it says, 'I will return to my house from which I came.'
25 and when it comes, 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 dwell there. And the last state of that person is worse
than the first."

What is this mean?

Jesus means this.

It is not enough to be against Satan if you're not with Jesus.

Jesus can cast those unclean spirits out.

The gospel can be preached to you and the good news of Jesus and the kingdom of God can come into your life.

Your life can get swept up and things can get put back in order.

You could try and apply some biblical principles.

But, if you just let Jesus kick the demons out and you don't let Jesus come and live in your heart.

If you do not accept Jesus as your savior you are going to be worse than you were before you met Jesus.

The point of this passage in what Jesus says is not to teach us how to keep demons away.

Nor is it to tell us about the intricacies of what demons do after they've been cast out.

Point is that you got to be with Jesus.

He needs to dwell in the temple that is your body.

I think we still see this principle at work today even though we don't often see people have demons cast out.

We see this with those who grew up in church especially as children.

They get a front row seat to see the kingdom of God every single week.

But if they leave it's walls and they never actually come into the kingdom themselves.

They never accept Jesus as their savior.

Then when they leave things are going to get really hard.

So we have to decide what we will do with Jesus.

Are we going to be all in with Jesus or are we against Jesus?

He will not accept anything less than all in.

Point number two: **Being against Jesus leads to judgement (v. 29-36).**

We're going to skip ahead to verse 29.

Don't worry we'll come back to 27-28 but I want to hit you with the bad news first before I give you the good news.

The bad news is that being against Jesus.

Deciding that you do not believe Him you do not trust Him you are not putting your faith in Him as your savior.

That will lead to judgment.

Not judgment like Christians will look down on you and will think we're better than you.

Judgment as in one day you will sit before the white Throne of judgment where Jesus will sit.

And after you were dead or after He returns you will come before Him and He will judge your life.

And he's not weighing your good deeds and your bad Deeds.

He's not using a complicated moral system to see if you have put more good into the world than bad.

There's one main criteria.

Have you accepted Jesus or have you not?

And those who have not accepted Jesus will be judged.

Verse 29, **"when the crowds were increasing, He began to say, "this generation is an evil generation."**

Notice that Jesus says this as the crowds are getting bigger.

Every consultant or church growth Guru would tell you don't shoot yourself on the foot here Jesus.

Things are going really well.

You should be encouraging the crowd not chasing them off.

But Jesus explains why this generation and these Crowds Are Evil crowds.

He continues, **"it seeks for a sign, but no sign will be given to it except for the sign of Jonah."**

what does it mean that the crowd was seeking a sign?

If you remember back in verse 16 it said **"others to test him, kept seeking from him a sign from heaven."**

so there were some who just said now don't trust Jesus he's bad working with demons.

There were others in the crowd who weren't quite sure yet.

They're on the fence they're still evaluating they want to gather more information.

This is me I like to gather lots of information before I make any decision.

If you saw how much information I gather you might tell me I do a little too much Gathering need to make a decision quicker.

This is true for the crowds too.

They keep trying to test Jesus and evaluate Jesus.

We've seen a lot of miracles so far in the Gospel of Luke

and we're going to see more before we're done.

But the crowd hasn't seen enough yet.

There's those who say to Jesus do it again.

Now do it over here.

Do it this way instead.

Can you do something other than cast out demons I've seen that one before.

What other tricks do you have Jesus I just really feel like I need you to prove it to me.

Because it says that **"they kept seeking."**

they continue to seek because no matter what sign Jesus gives them it's not enough.

They want more.

And it says that they want to sign from Heaven.

It seems as if there's a particular kind of thing they want Jesus to do.

I think this is an eschatological sign that they are looking for.

They want to know if Jesus really is the Messiah and if he is they want

Heaven itself to prove it by doing something like destroying the Romans.

Or accomplishing a miracle that would set their Nation free so they can be independent again.

Whatever it is that they are seeking Jesus isn't doing it.

He is not a circus monkey performs for entertainment.

He is the Living God.

And Jesus says that they're seeking is evil.

He tells them about the sign of Jonah,

verse 30, **" for as Jonah became a sign to the people of Nineveh, so will the son of man be to this generation."**

what is the sign of Jonah?

Well for three days Jonah was in the belly of a whale at the bottom of the ocean.

Jonah himself said that he was down in sheol and the place of the Dead.

Jesus says you're going to get a sign like that one.

Jesus is foreshadowing His death and Resurrection.

He will lay for 3 days not an animal's mouth but in the mouth of a tomb.

Not in the bottom of the ocean but in the place where all the dead go.

And what Jonah experienced metaphorically Jesus will experience in actuality.

That will be their sign.

And as the Angel told Lazarus even after a man comes back from the dead there will be many who still do not believe.

Who still want another sign.

Verse 31, **"the queen of the South will rise up at judgment with the men of this generation and condemn them, for she came from the ends of the Earth to hear the wisdom of Solomon and behold someone greater than Solomon is here."**

this is the Queen of Sheba.

You can read about her in First Kings 10.

She heard about Solomon's wisdom and left everything behind and traveled for months to come and see him to hear it for herself.

And when she heard it she accepted it.

And if these Crowds Are Here hearing not the wisdom of a man but the wisdom of God.

And they go, "eh not sure."

Jesus says that on the day of judgment the Queen of Sheba along with other members of this generation who have accepted Jesus will stand in judgment over you.

Why?

Because they saw the same evidence that you saw and yet they accepted Jesus.

They believed.

And so you will not be able to say I didn't know they will tell you I knew less than you did and I believed.

Verse 32, **"the men of Nineveh will rise up a judgment with this generation and condemn it, for they repented at the preaching of Jonah, and behold, something greater than Jonah is here."**

Israel really would not have like that one.

Jonah wasn't weird for hating Nineveh.

All of us would have hated it.

Nineveh was the capital of Assyria which is one of the most brutal and horrific empires of human history.

And all of Israel hated them.

It's why Jonah ran away he didn't want to preach to them he wanted God to kill them.

But God says hey when you stand before me and judgment those Ninevites will stand over you and they will judge you saying you should have believed because we did.

The Ninevites who repented when they heard Jonah preaching.

I don't know if you have read the Book of Jonah in a while.

Jonah gives what I think is the worst sermon in the whole Bible.

He would flunk preaching class.

All he does is walk around and say God's going to kill you in 40 days.

God's going to kill you.

And the city hears it and they all repent.

Revival like you've never seen before breaks out.

A city with a 120,000 people tear their clothes and call for a city-wide fast begging for God to save them.

And God does.

Jesus is a lot better preacher than Jonah was.

Way better.

The Sermon on the Mount is so good that there are people who quote it and don't realize it's from the Bible.

There are people who hate the Bible and yet there are things in some of Jesus's sermons that they love.

Jesus is greater than Jonah he is greater than Solomon and anyone else you can find.

He has none of their weaknesses and he is even better and wiser and more amazing than their greatest strengths.

And here he is.

And those who do not accept Jesus will be judged.

You also see who are the people here who respond to Jesus?

Foreigners.

People from far off places.

The queen of the South and the men of Nineveh.

So Jesus foreshadowing that his salvation will go to the ends of the Earth and the Gentiles will believe.

There are some who are just like the crowds.

They challenge him to man that got show them a sign.

God if you're real kill me right now for blaspheming against you.

God if you really would prove yourself do this show me Give Me A Sign.

God could do that sign immediately and they find excuses after.

God has given sign after sign after sign.

“No one after lighting a lamp puts it in a cellar or under a basket, but on a stand, so that those who enter may see the light. 34 Your eye is the lamp of your body. When your eye is healthy, your whole body is full of light, but when it is bad, your body is full of darkness. 35 therefore be careful lest the light in you be darkness. 36 If then your whole body is full of light, having no part dark, it will be wholly bright, as when a lamp with its rays gives you light.”

What He means is that the light is here and it is in their face.

The light of the world is shining upon them.

Jesus is not hiding.

God is not trying to make it difficult for people to come into the kingdom of God.

The light is here and they can see it.

And if their eyes are healthy.

If they are looking.

They're looking at the light of the world and if they acknowledge yes that's the light then they will be full of light.

But if as they look at the light of the world they say now that's Darkness it's the power of Satan that's a charlatan that's all made up stories, in this over here this is the light.

Then Jesus says be careful that what you think is the light that what you think is good and true is not Darkness and Evil.

Because Jesus is the light of the world and he's here we have to accept them and if we do not we will be in darkness.

The final judgment we will be cast to a dark how much there's no escape. That is the bad news but there is good news.

Point number three **those who accept Jesus will be blessed.**

"As he said these things, a woman in the crowd raised her voice and said to him, "Blessed is the womb that bore you, and the breasts at which you nursed!"

It appears like there's a woman who hears Jesus.

She isn't rejecting Jesus.

She is not saying that he's working by the power of demons.

But she's also not expressing fully mature faith in Christ.

And she cries out saying wow Jesus your mom must have been so blessed.

How amazing it is.

Mary the Mother of God must be so full of holiness and blessing.

28 But he said, "Blessed rather are those who hear the word of God and keep it!"

But Jesus corrects her.

Jesus doesn't say no my mother is not blessed at all.

And yes they're Traditions that may venerate Mary to a level that we disagree with.

Jesus wants this woman to say is that yes Mary is blessed among all women.

Not because she got to give birth to Jesus and not because Jesus nursed at her breasts.

Mary is blessed because she heard the word of God and she kept it.

Mary is blessed because she heard the words of the Angel and she believed it.

Mary is blessed because she heard the report from the Shepherds and she treasured it in her heart.

Mary is blessed because she obeyed Jesus.

Mary is blessed because it seems as if she still is following Jesus and listening to his words.

After all, some of Christ's siblings got to grow up with Him,

But they didn't believe Him and tried to stop them.

So they were not blessed.

The blessing that Mary received is available to any of us.

Those who hear the kingdom of God preached who accept it who receive it and who obey it can receive God's blessing.

You can receive the blessing of eternal life forever.

You can get to be with Jesus in a world of love and joy and peace forever.

But you got to accept Jesus.

You have to follow Jesus.

You have to put your faith in him.

All of us have to make the decision what do we do with Jesus are we all in with Jesus do we accept Jesus or do we reject him there is no middle ground.

God says the lukewarm I will spit out of my mouth.

But if we accept him and if we follow him there are blessings Beyond Your Wildest imagination.

Not just after you die here and now.

So put your faith in Jesus.

If you are not a Christian I want to invite you to accept Jesus.

You want to offer you the blessings of the kingdom of God that are here.

You need to believe that Jesus really is God.

You need to believe that He really did come to die in your place.

That He came to defeat the power of sin and death that has ruined much of your life and that keeps you from being who God made you to be.

And be willing to follow Hhim.

If you hear the words of Jesus accept them and keep them the blessing of God is here for you.

If that's you or if you have more questions and you want to talk about Jesus please pull me aside pull rob a side pull any of the elders who would be overjoyed to talk with you about Jesus.

Those of you who have put your faith in Jesus who have accepted Jesus as your Savior I want to remind you of the blessing that that is.

You want to point you to the blessing that is to come.

Because it is better than anything you could ever dream.

CONCLUSION:

1. [Summary] We have to decide if we are with Jesus or against Jesus. Being against Jesus leads to judgement. Being with Jesus leads to blessing.
2. I hope that you are with Jesus. Because being with Jesus brings eternal life and peace beyond all understanding. If we only believe.