



Jesus was driving out a demon that was mute, and when the demon had gone out, the mute person spoke and the crowds were amazed. Some of them said, "By the power of Beelzebub, the prince of demons, he drives out demons." Others, to test him, asked him for a sign from heaven. But he knew their thoughts and said to them, "Every kingdom divided against itself will be laid waste and house will fall against house. And if Satan is divided against himself, how will his kingdom stand? For you say that it is by Beelzebub that I drive out demons. If I, then, drive out demons by Beelzebub, by whom do your own people drive them out? Therefore they will be your judges. But if it is by the finger of God that I drive out demons, then the Kingdom of God has come upon you. When a strong man fully armed guards his palace, his possessions are safe. But when one stronger than he attacks and overcomes him, he takes away the armor on which he relied and distributes the spoils. Whoever is not with me is against me, and whoever does not gather with me scatters."

Introductory Prayer: Lord Jesus, as I prepare for Easter during this Lenten season, I turn to you once again in prayer. I wish to see you with the eyes of faith. I wish to welcome the salvation you came to give me and to accept it with a humble heart. Now, during this time of prayer, I want to give everything over to you so that your love and truth may direct my life.

Petition: Lord, help me to accept with simple faith the reality of who you are.

1. All for God's Glory: When Christ works this simple miracle, the crowds are amazed.

They are amazed at what Christ has done, but surely they were also amazed at what the mute person said. We do not know what was said, but it is likely that they were words that glorified God in thanksgiving for his miracle. Christ bestows freedom by loosening the tongue of the mute person so that he can glorify God his creator. When Jesus frees the mute person from Satan – who does not want God to be glorified and who wants to keep mankind in the chains of sin, it is so that God will be glorified. In my life, do I seek to glorify God for the wonders of his creation and all the good things he has done for me?

2. Truth or Lies: Jesus' enemies could not deny the miracle he had just worked, but instead of accepting his power to drive out evil spirits, they came up with an accusation that it was Beelzebub who caused the miracle. Their envy gets the best of their common sense. Envy always tries to find a way around the truth. It asks for a sign or proposes a false accusation. Jesus counters envy's contorted reasoning with simple straightforward logic: "Every kingdom divided against itself will be laid waste and house will fall against house." It cannot be by the Beelzebub's power that he drives out demons because that would mean Beelzebub is driving out his own demons. Simple logic shows that this is not so. Does my own faith help me to differentiate between lies that I hear and the truth?

3. Jesus Challenges Satan's Reign: The strong man that Jesus speaks of is the devil. He has kept mankind under his control since Adam and Eve's fall. He has had nothing to worry about up to now because he has been the strong man able to defend from all comers his prize of corrupted human nature. But Jesus is stronger, and he has come to attack the devil and win back from him what he has taken. He takes away his armor of evil, hate, anger, lust and egoism. He redeems mankind from the clutches of the evil one. Can I truly say that I set my faith in God and that he truly brings about good despite the natural calamities or bad intentions and actions of others, including the devil himself?

Conversation with Christ: Lord, help me to accept your miracles in my life so that my life will give you glory in my actions, words and thoughts. Do not let me be blind to the force of your love in the world. I know you are stronger than Satan. I want to be in your camp. I want to be rescued from the clutches of sin by the omnipotence of your love.

Resolution: When I am faced with a temptation, I will call to mind that Jesus is stronger than Satan and he can give me the strength to reject the temptation.

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