

Then Jesus entered a house, and again a crowd gathered, so that he and his disciples were not even able to eat. ²¹ When his family heard about this, they went to take charge of him, for they said, “He is out of his mind.”

²² And the teachers of the law who came down from Jerusalem said, “He is possessed by Beelzebub! By the prince of demons he is driving out demons.”

²³ So Jesus called them and spoke to them in parables: “How can Satan drive out Satan? ²⁴ If a kingdom is divided against itself, that kingdom cannot stand. ²⁵ If a house is divided against itself, that house cannot stand. ²⁶ And if Satan opposes himself and is divided, he cannot stand; his end has come. ²⁷ In fact, no one can enter a strong man’s house and carry off his possessions unless he first ties up the strong man. Then he can rob his house. ²⁸ I tell you the truth, all the sins and blasphemies of men will be forgiven them. ²⁹ But whoever blasphemes against the Holy Spirit will never be forgiven; he is guilty of an eternal sin.”

³⁰ He said this because they were saying, “He has an evil spirit.”

³¹ Then Jesus’ mother and brothers arrived. Standing outside, they sent someone in to call him. ³² A crowd was sitting around him, and they told him, “Your mother and brothers are outside looking for you.”

³³ “Who are my mother and my brothers?” he asked.

³⁴ Then he looked at those seated in a circle around him and said, “Here are my mother and my brothers! ³⁵ Whoever does God’s will is my brother and sister and mother.” (NIV84)

Theme: Where do you stand?

1. Christ stands against Satan
2. We Stand with Christ.

You see it in movies. Perhaps when you were younger, you did it yourself. Someone draws a line in the dirt and asks a simple question: “Whose side are you on? If you are with me, you’ll cross the line. If not, go over there.”

In a way we see something similar today. We see Jesus standing in a house preaching. Where do you stand? Do you stand with Christ or

against him? Do you stand in the house listening to him, or outside? Today we see that Christ stands against Satan. And we stand with Christ and work with him.

Our text takes place during the early part of Jesus’ ministry. By this time, he had healed many people from physical diseases. He changed water into wine. And Matthew tells us that right before our lesson took place, Jesus cast a demon out of a man that made him blind and mute. It comes as no surprise, then, that Jesus had become quite popular. In fact, when Jesus and his disciples went into a house a large crowd followed him. This crowd was so large that Jesus and his disciples didn’t even have enough room to eat. The news about Jesus must have spread. Some of the Jewish religious leaders—Mark talks about the Scribes, and Matthew the Pharisees, came to pay Jesus a visit. They traveled all the way from Jerusalem in the south to the North part of the country near Galilee—most likely Capernaum. They wanted to put his popularity to an end.

He is possessed by Beelzebub! By the prince of demons he is driving out demons. Notice how the Jewish leaders didn’t deny that Jesus was casting out demons. That fact had already been very well established, and could not be denied. Instead they claimed that Jesus was casting out demons for Satan. If this were the case then Satan was using Jesus to play mind games on the people. By casting out demons, people would consider Jesus a good guy—sent from God. Therefore the people would listen to his teachings. And Jesus taught against the Pharisees and other Jewish leaders. So Satan is making Jesus get rid of some of his demons so that people would trust him. And then people would listen to Jesus when he led them away from the Jewish religion—the one true religion according to the Pharisees.

Chances are, that the Pharisees didn’t really believe what they said about Jesus. They were searching for something, anything, to get people to stop following him. So they lied. That is what unbelievers do. Those that don’t want anything to do with Christ—those that oppose him, spread lies about him. “Jesus never really existed,” they say. “He was just a figment of the imagines in the minds of some zealous Jews. Or he did exist, but he wasn’t that spectacular of a person. He was a good, decent man and probably a good preacher, but

that is about it. It wasn't until years after his death that stories about him go embellished.”

Notice what they do. Jesus is no longer God. He is no longer holy and without sin. They make Jesus into a mere man, just like you and I. They turn him into simply a good guy. One who showed us how to be kind and to love others. And thus, through their lies, they make Jesus not the Savior. And if Jesus isn't the Savior, then we are still in our sins. And we have to earn our own way to eternal life. For if Jesus is just a man, then he has no power over Satan. And he cannot cast out demons.

But that is exactly what Jesus did. Again and again Jesus proved that he had power over demons. For this wasn't the only time he had cast out demons. Numerous times Jesus showed his power over demons by forcing them out of somebody. He cast a legion of demons out of one person and forced them into a herd of pigs. He cast another demon out of a man, that was so ruthless that the man had to live in a cave and bound with chains. And all he had to do was command them to come out. They had to listen to him. For he is God. And they were subject to him.

And Jesus showed the crowd just how absurd the Pharisees argument was. If he really was working for the devil, then why is he working against the devil? If the devil really were using him to trick people into thinking he is trustworthy since he is able to cast out demons, then he only would have done it a few times. Not multiple times as Jesus did. Satan's goal is to get us into his fold. One way he does that is by possessing people. So why then would he constantly have Jesus take away people away from him? That means that Satan would not only be fighting against God, but also against himself. And as Jesus points out, **if Satan opposes himself and is divided, he cannot stand; his end has come.** Jesus was clearly not a pawn of Satan, but he was working against the devil in the name of the Lord.

So what exactly was Jesus doing when he cast out demons? He was making Satan weaker. **No one can enter a strong man's house and carry off his possessions unless he first ties up the strong man. Then he can rob his house.** By casting out his demons, Jesus was tying Satan up. Then he could plunder everything that belonged to Satan. Jesus always has, and always will have power over Satan. We

saw it at the beginning of time. When the devil and his evil angels rebelled, it was Jesus and his angels that defeated them. And Jesus cast him down to hell to suffer for eternity. In our first lesson we saw that when Satan, in the form of a serpent, caused Adam and Eve to sin, God promised Adam and Eve that one of their descendants will crush Satan's head. Even in Satan's biggest triumph he is defeated and made subject to God.

This prophecy came true in Christ. When Jesus died, Satan thought he had won. But he only bruised Jesus' heel. For three days later Jesus rose from the dead. And thus he crushed Satan's head. And Jesus descended into hell to proclaim his victory over the devil. We see Jesus' power over Satan at the end of the world too. In our second lesson we see that God has bound Satan up and thrown him into the bowels of the earth. Jesus has power over Satan. And he has robbed us from Satan's house. Through his death and resurrection Jesus rescued us from the dominion of the devil. He removed the guilt of all our sins—so we will not be condemned. He worked faith into our hearts so that we may believe that he is our Savior. And his resurrection proves that we will rise from the dead and instead of joining Satan in hell we will live in heaven forever.

Unlike the Pharisees Christ stands against Satan. And unlike Jesus' family we stand with Christ.

Jesus' family also heard about his followers. And they couldn't believe that he was so popular and was teaching so many. They thought he was crazy. **He is out of his mind,** they said. So they traveled the 30 miles or so, from Nazareth to Capernaum. They wanted to talk to Jesus. So they stood outside of the house and called for him. Most likely they wanted to take him home. To get him to stop preaching and gaining so many followers and such. Word went through the crowd that Jesus' family wanted to speak to him. But Jesus refused to talk to them. Why? Because they were trying to prohibit his work. We find out elsewhere, that Jesus' brothers didn't believe in him, at the time. They had a hard time believing that their brother was God and the Savior of the entire world. But what about Mary? She certainly knew who Jesus was. And yet we see Mary, from time to time, meddling in Jesus ministry. And she tried to tell him what to do.

We too might act like Jesus' family from time to time. There are those who stand on the outside. They call for Christ. But they don't know him. They have no idea who he is, or what he has done. But they call out to him for help. But Jesus doesn't listen to those who don't believe in him. Or there are those who stand on the outside, yet they are Christians. They don't come into the house. They don't sit and Jesus' feet and hear his Word. And soon, unless things change, they will no longer be Christians. For without hearing the gospel their faith will become weaker. And they may lose it completely.

Or we can act like Mary. Those who intentionally or not, prohibit the work of Christ. Instead of helping out by volunteering we decide we can make better use of our time. Or we simply don't want to volunteer to take care of God's house or help with gospel ministry. You figure other people will volunteer. Or the pastor can do it. Perhaps you believe you have put in your time. And now someone else can do the work. Or may you volunteer for a position, but that is as far as it goes. When it actually comes time to do something, you are no where to be found. And so like Mary did with Jesus, you are prohibiting the gospel ministry by not doing anything. For we either work for the gospel, or against the gospel. There is no middle ground. So I ask you: Where do you stand?

As Christians we stand with Christ. For he stood against Satan. And because he stood against Satan, we have the victory over Satan. For Christ did not keep the victory for himself. But he defeated Satan to win us. We don't have to worry about living with the devil forever. For Christ has paid for our sins. And we will dwell with him forever. We know no longer have to be afraid of the devil and all his power. For we have Jesus Christ on our side, who has infinite power over the devil.

All this Christ did not because of who we are or what we have done. But he lived, suffered, died, and rose simply of out grace. He was his love for sinners that caused Christ to do this for us. And those who stand with Christ are forgiven by Christ. They are part of God's family. In Luke's account Jesus said, **My mother and brothers are those who hear God's word and put it into practice.** Jesus considered faith as more important than physical relationships. For although he rejected his unbelieving family, he accepts us as part of his very own.

And as part of God's family, forgiven and saved, we gather around him at his house. Like his disciples, who sat at his feet to hear him preach, we too sit to listen to the Lord speak to us through his Holy Word. They filled up the place so much, that no one could move. They wanted to hear Christ. We want to hear Christ as well. As Christians we want to know more about him. To be comforted by gospel. So we gather around his Word.

And we want others to know and to do the same. So we not only sit around Christ. But we also stand with Christ. We do his will. We share his Word with others so that they may know their one and only Savior. We volunteer around God's house. Working for the good of all those who believe in him. We do what we can to spread the gospel, live a life of faith, and to do things that enable others to better spread the gospel. So that together we can all stand before God in heaven.

So, where do you stand? There is one major difference between the line in the sand and whether or not you stand with Christ: We don't chose to stand with Christ. Christ has chosen us to be with him. So we gladly stand with him and do his will. For he is the one who bound Satan, our enemy up for eternity. He plundered us from the devil. And he will lead us to stand with him in heaven forever. So now, on earth, we sit at his feet, and stand with so others may stand before him forever. Amen.