

The Finger of God

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[0 : 00] So, with that, I want you to take your Bibles and open them to Luke chapter 11.

! Luke chapter 11. And I'm going to be reading verses 14 through 28. ! Luke 11, 14 through 28.

And he was casting out a demon, and it was mute.

So it was, when the demon had gone out, that the mute spoke, and the multitudes marveled. But some of them said, he casts out demons by Beelzebub, the ruler of the demons.

Others, testing him, sought from him a sign from heaven. But he, knowing their thoughts, said to them, Every kingdom divided against itself is brought to desolation, and a house divided against a house fails or falls.

[1 : 11] If Satan also is divided against himself, how will his kingdom stand? Because you say, I cast out demons by Beelzebub. And if I cast out demons by Beelzebub, by whom do your sons cast them out?

Therefore they will be your judges. But if I cast out demons with the finger of God, surely the kingdom of God has come upon you. When a strong man, fully armed, guards his own palace, his goods are in peace.

But when a stronger than he comes upon him and overcomes him, he takes from him all his armor in which he trusted, divides his spoils. But he who is not with me is against me.

And he who does not gather with me scatters. When an unclean spirit goes out of a man, he goes through dry places, seeking rest and finding none.

He says, I will return to my house from which I came. And when he comes, he finds it swept and put in order. Then he goes and takes with him seven other spirits more wicked than himself.

[2 : 24] And they enter and dwell there. And the last state of that man is worse than the first. And it happened as he spoke these things that a certain woman from the crowd raised her voice and said to him, Blessed is the womb that bore you and the breasts which nursed you.

But he said, More than that, blessed are those who hear the word of God and keep it. Now, before we kind of walk through this passage this morning, I want to call your attention to something Jesus said about halfway through the text.

And it's something that is intriguing to me. When I reread this in preparation for my sermon this morning, I'm just kind of stuck on this thing. It's interesting to me.

And I have discovered, and I can say to you that I believe that this one thing Jesus said is a defining phrase, a defining truth that helps us in our understanding of really Luke's purpose in this portion of the Bible, of his account.

Jesus said in verse 20, look at it, verse 20, And if, and if, and I would say to you literally, it would be since, since, I cast out demons with, and here it is, the finger of God.

[3 : 53] If I cast out, or since I cast out demons with the finger of God, surely the kingdom of God has come upon you. The finger of God.

And I find that interesting. I find it intriguing. And we're going to see what Jesus meant by that a little bit later. But let me ask you something. Does God have fingers? It is a serious question.

Okay. Does He have fingers? Well, actually, no. God does not have fingers. He does not have a corporeal body.

He's not flesh and blood. Yeah, the Bible teaches that quite plainly. And yet, at the same time, the Bible speaks of God's hands, His fingers.

It speaks of His arms. It speaks of His eyes, His ears, His mouth, even His nose. In fact, the Bible even speaks of God having wings.

[4 : 56] Remember Keith Green, an old song of his years ago, he said, that doesn't mean that God is a big chicken. Okay. Just because He has big wings. But it speaks of Him having wings.

And, of course, it's a metaphor. And it's one of great comfort. Psalm 17, verse 8. Hide me under the shadow of your wings. So what is all this about?

God doesn't have these things. What is it all about? Well, the technical term is, these are called anthropomorphisms. It's a very long word, which simply means that these are words that describe God in terms of human characteristics, human attributes.

All right, so what about this expression used by Jesus? Because Jesus is the one who used it. What about this expression, the finger of God? Well, we can find a few examples of that in, of this very same thing in the Old Testament.

These same expressions are found in a number of places, as a matter of fact, in the Old Testament. The Old Testament. For example, when God gave to Moses, and you might remember this, when He gave to Moses the tablets of stone that contained on them the law, the ten words, the commandments, Exodus chapter 31, verse 18 says, and when He, that's God, had made an end of speaking with Him, speaking with Moses, on Mount Sinai, He gave Moses two tablets of the testimony.

[6 : 25] It's the Ten Commandments. Tablets of stone, and then it says, written with the finger of God. Very, very same expression that Jesus used here in Luke 11.

Again, the idea here is not that God has fingers. If that's what we get enamored about and focus on, then we're missing something. Because the idea is not that God kind of sort of took His finger and He engraved His commandments on these two tablets of stone.

The idea here is that God is simply that God Himself inscribed His law in stone. That's the idea here. Now, Moses didn't write it.

That's what we're to understand. He didn't write it. He didn't engrave it in these stones. These were not composed by Moses. No man composed these laws. God did. And therefore, God's law is divine.

God's law is perfect. It's holy. It's fixed. Permanent, that is. And here's the expression, etched in stone.

[7 : 33] Etched in stone by God Himself. All right, so what then? They are to be obeyed. That's the idea behind the expression, finger of God. Let me give you another Old Testament example.

Belshazzar, the king of Babylon, son of Nebuchadnezzar. You might remember this story. King Belshazzar had committed sacrilege, really, and blasphemy and some drunken orgy and when all of a sudden a deathly silence fell upon everyone in the room because Deuteronomy, excuse me, Daniel 5, 5 says, suddenly, the fingers of a human hand appeared and wrote on the plaster of the wall.

The king watched the hand as it wrote. We can just kind of picture that, a hand and the fingers and writing upon the wall, the plaster wall and King Belshazzar saw this.

Can you imagine that? Well, what did the writing say? Well, none of the king's quote, wise men end quote could read it and so they got Daniel, Daniel to read it and to interpret it and of course he was able to because God had enabled Daniel to do so and the writing said, mene, mene, tike, perez.

What does that mean? Sounds like gibberish. Well, Daniel interpreted it. Mene, God has numbered the days of your kingdom and brought it to an end.

[9 : 08] Good news, huh? Tike, or tikel, you have been weighed in the balances and found wanting. That is, you've been found deficient. Perez, your kingdom is divided and given to the Medes and the Persians.

Alright, so God wrote on the wall and it is His judgment, the judgment of King Belshazzar and He wrote it with His own hand and nothing could change it.

Nothing was going to alter it. Nothing could stop this. It was the judgment of God and the Bible says that that very night Belshazzar, king of the Babylonians, was slain and Darius the Mede took over the kingdom.

It's exactly as God said would happen. The finger of God. The other example, one other example and the one I believe that Jesus is alluding to is found in Exodus chapter 8 and verse 19.

And if you know anything about this portion of Exodus, you know that this is where God is using Moses to bring about the plagues upon Egypt and upon Pharaoh and upon his household and with the idea, the eventual idea, of delivering God's people out of the bondage of Egypt.

[10 : 20] And so we've already had two plagues and somehow the priests of Egypt, I think obviously through trickery and deception, they've been able to duplicate the first two plagues.

And then we get to the third one where the dust becomes gnats. And so the priests, they try to do the same thing and guess what?

They can't do it. They can't duplicate it. And what do they say? In verse 19 of chapter 8, then the magicians said to Pharaoh, this is the finger of God.

This is the finger of God. It is God did this. It's not that they believed in God, the one true God, it wasn't that they were worshiping Him, that they just knew that this was bonafide, this was real. Now, you read between the lines, actually they're saying we can't duplicate that because we have no way to trick, to bring about this by trickery. This really is deity that's doing this.

[11:28] God is doing this. The finger of God. So, interesting, isn't it? Jesus said, the finger of God, I cast out this demon by the finger of God and it is a reference, you know, takes us back to the Old Testament where God brought about His works, His miracles, His judgment by the finger of God.

So, what's the point here? When Jesus said that He cast out demons with the finger of God, when He said that, He was revealing a whole lot more than just His source of power to cast out demons. A whole lot more to this passage than just an awesome miracle of a demon exorcism. And so, this text is about something more than that.

The fact is that the expression, the finger of God, that little thing that Jesus just kind of inserted into the dialogue, that little expression is kind of the entryway or maybe even the capstone for three truths that we can learn from this passage.

Three truths that Jesus reveals here to us on this occasion. And here they are on the front end. Jesus reveals His identity.

[12:49] That's number one. Second, He reveals, Jesus reveals man's depravity. And then, thirdly and finally, Jesus reveals salvation's authenticity.

I mean, by this one act that Jesus did and He ascribed it to God and the finger of God, this one act revealed all of these things. Jesus' true identity, man's hopeless depravity, and salvation's authenticity.

So let's look at each of these three. First of all, Jesus reveals His identity. He reveals His identity. You know, just honestly, verse 14, you know, bless Luke's heart.

Verse 14 is just written in such a mundane way. Kind of just a, you know, oh, by the way kind of thing. Verse 14, and He was casting out a demon.

That's it. Just so mundane. So humdrum kind of way to put it. Sort of like, and He had lunch. So, matter of fact, but, you know, as if this kind of thing just happened every day.

[14:10] And the fact is, it did. Probably happened nearly every day. Everywhere Jesus went. And so, here it is again. In verse 14, Jesus is doing it again. He was casting out a demon, and it was mute.

It is, the demon had made the man mute, mute, or dumb. Probably deaf and dumb. And so it was, again, just kind of commonplace.

And so it was, when the demon had gone out, that the mute spoke. So Jesus healed the man as well. And the multitudes marveled. Well, of course they did.

You would too. Amazing. So, but, but written so mundane. So, so, you know, lacking any kind of wow to it.

And I think if we were writing it, we would write it differently. Because this is exciting. Why? He cast, and so it was, he cast out a demon. What? Huh? Cast out a demon?

[15:09] But you see, here's the point, and the point is made numerous times in the Gospels. The focus here is not on the miracle. It really is not. The focus is on Jesus.

That is, specifically how he was able to cast demons out. And more importantly, why he cast demons out. And even more importantly, what this tells us about Jesus.

Who Jesus is. And the most important of all, what kind of response all of that should, should invoke in us. It was all about revealing Jesus' true identity.

You might remember that when we studied Luke 7, verse 19, way back when, when John the Baptist sent two of his disciples to inquire of Jesus, and they asked, are you the coming one?

That is, are you the Messiah? Or do we look for another? Remember that? And Jesus responded, go and tell John the things that you have seen and heard.

[16:15] That the blind see, the lame walk, the lepers are cleansed, the deaf hear, the dead are raised, and the poor have the Gospel preached to them. Go tell him those things.

You see, what does he say? I am the Messiah. I am the Christ. And here is the evidence. That's what this miracle is all about. Then we skip forward to verse 20.

Again, this passage, and if, or again, since I cast out demons with the finger of God, surely, he said, surely, surely, that is, you can be sure, the kingdom of God has come upon you.

Now, now get that. Understand that. That's what this, this miracle is all about. That's what we should see in this miracle, the casting out of a demon, and the healing of a mute, deaf and mute man.

That's what it's about. It proves that the kingdom of God has come. Because Jesus is the embodiment of the kingdom of God. Why? Because He is the King.

[17:19] And He has come. And the casting out of demons, that's the kingdom of Satan, healing the blind, lame, the deaf, and the dumb, all these things, this is the unique demonstration of Jesus' unique identity as the unique, one and only, Son of God.

John 2, 11, when Jesus turned the water into wine, remember that story? The Bible says this, the first of His signs, Jesus did in Cana of Galilee and manifested His glory.

He manifested His glory. Which John said in John 1, 14, the glory as of the only begotten of the Father. That was the purpose, you see, of turning water into wine.

Not so that some party guests could have their drink and be a part of the celebration. Not so that His mother, you know, would be disgraced or the mother and father of the bride could be disgraced. He didn't do it for that. He didn't do it to wow the crowd. It was to manifest His glory. In John 5, 36, the works which the Father has granted me to accomplish, these very works which I am doing, bear me witness that the Father has sent me.

[18:40] That's the purpose. To reveal His identity, His true identity. And then how do people respond to the works of Jesus?

The various responses. What conclusion do they come to when they hear about the things that Jesus did and said?

What about those who were there that day and saw this miracle, this incredible miracle, casting out this demon? How did they respond? And what kind of conclusion do they come to?

Well, the responses recorded in this passage reveal something else. They reveal something else, this time, about the race of mankind.

And so, the second thing I want you to notice is Jesus reveals man's depravity. Man's depravity. And these two go together because He reveals His identity which then reveals man's depravity.

[19:47] Depravity. What do we mean by the word depravity? Does it refer to, you know, kind of a flagrant, gross sinfulness? That's often what we think of when we hear the word depravity.

And it can be used in that sense, but really that's not the idea here. Does it refer to a love of sin and a will that is powerless to say no to sin?

Well, actually, yes. It does refer to that, but that's only part of it. Depravity refers to the inability to do anything but sin and the inability to do anything about sin.

That's depravity. I mean, to choose Christ. To choose salvation. To respond to the gospel. To respond to His salvation. The complete inability to respond to it.

And I think Lazarus, the story of Lazarus in John 11 is a perfect illustration. He had died, remember? And he had been buried because that's what you do with dead people. And those days you did it pretty quickly.

[21:00] And he's been dead now four days. And Jesus finally comes to the tomb and when he arrives at the tomb in verse 43 of John 11, he cried out with a loud voice.

And what did he say? Lazarus, come forth. And it's a command. Jesus commanded Lazarus to come forth out of the tomb.

I got to think about this. You know, as a pastor, I've conducted probably well over a hundred funerals in my ministry. And not one time did I lean over the casket and say, Hey, you there.

Get up. Come out of there. Not one time did I do that. I'd be laughed to scorn if I did something like that. But now, what if I did, though?

What if I did just go down to the casket and say, Hey, get out of that casket. Come out of there. Come back alive. What if I did that? What would happen? Nothing.

[21:59] Why? Because dead people can't hear. Dead people cannot consciously think. Can't think at all. They have no consciousness.

Dead people cannot move. Move. Dead people are totally unable to respond to any stimulus. Dead people cannot obey commands.

Unless, of course, Jesus is the one giving the command. See? And that's the point. Verse 44 says in John 11, He who had died came forth.

Jesus said, Lazarus, come forth, and he who is dead came forth. Lazarus did exactly what Jesus commanded. Jesus gave Lazarus the ability to obey.

Now, what does that say to us? Well, Ephesians chapter 2 and verse 1, And you he made alive, who were, what? Dead.

[22 : 57] Dead in trespasses and sins. That's who we are. We're born that way. Dead in trespasses and sins. Now, that's not a description of Lazarus.

That's a description of every one of us. And it describes all of us before we were saved, before we were made alive by a gracious God.

All of us, I go on in that passage, once walked according to the course of this world, according to the prince of the power of the air, the spirit who now works in the sons of disobedience, and on and on Paul goes.

This is depravity. Classic description. The absolute inability to choose life and righteousness by choosing Christ.

Depraved. We have a perfect description of depravity in our passage here in Luke 11. We see the depravity of man, I think, in the various responses to Jesus' miracle.

[24 : 01] First of all, mankind's inability to think rationally about Christ. That's the first thing. Look at verse 15. Some of them said, He casts out demons by Beelzebub.

Some versions have Beelzebul. The ruler of demons. Others, testing him, sought of him a sign from heaven.

That means they had the same, came to the same conclusion, so they were a little bit more gracious. We're not quite sure that you were casting him out by demons. And so, give us some heavenly sign, as if he hadn't before.

And so, what's going on here? Beelzebub, or Beelzebul, was the chief god of the Philistines. But the Jews, over the years, they kind of tweaked the name just a bit to make it mean Lord of the Flies.

That's what Beelzebul means. Lord of the Flies. Or more literally, Lord of the Dung. That's what it means. Lord of the Dung.

[25 : 06] You understand the association between flies and dung, okay? You don't have to be explained. Now this is what, this is the name that the Jews had frequently used in reference to Satan.

And so, this is about the worst thing they could have said in relation to Jesus. About Jesus. I like what MacArthur said about this. He said, they called the highest and most holy one the lowest and most evil.

They called the one who was pure good pure evil. They called the one, called God the devil, perfect holiness, wickedness, truth incarnate, a liar, and they branded the Son of God a servant of Satan. Wow. Now, the interesting thing is that Jesus turns all of this on its head. And it really says, your conclusion about me and what I've done here is idiotic.

It is stupid. You see, there's nothing rational. There's nothing reasonable about a depraved mind.

[26 : 20] And so, look at how Jesus responds in verse 17. But he, knowing their thoughts, said to them, what you're thinking is pure foolishness. Now, that's my translation. He didn't use those words.

This is what he said. Every kingdom divided against itself is brought to desolation. And a house divided against a house itself falls. If Satan also is divided against himself, how will his kingdom stand?

And so, Jesus is just speaking in an axiom. This is an undeniable truth. Nobody could argue against this. And so, he's saying, it makes no sense that the devil would empower me, Jesus, to bring down his own kingdom, Satan's own kingdom.

That makes no sense. He wouldn't do that. It is irrational to think that he would. It's stupid. What is the only rational conclusion that person should come to?

Well, the irrational conclusion is that Jesus cast out the demon by the power of God. The finger of God. Which means then, if that be the case, and it is the case, the kingdom of God has come.

[27 : 31] It's actually come. Jesus is the Savior. He is the Messiah. He is the Christ. He is the Deliverer. And He has now come. That's the most rational conclusion anyone could come to.

But the depraved mind cannot think rationally about Christ. That's why we have so many weird and way out there theories and beliefs about Jesus and God and Holy Spirit and faith and religion and so forth.

And so, you know, a man, a woman can just invent his or her own God. I mean, we can just kind of invent our own set of beliefs, our own practices of faith, our own system of truth.

And does that make any rational sense when you think about it? about as much sense as describing 2 plus 2 equals 142 just because that happens to work for your life.

And that's really the bottom line on many of these crazy religions that are out there. Well, it works for me. You know, each person just needs to find the kind of religion that works for them.

[28 : 45] Ridiculous! Anything reasonable about that? It's irrational. But let's move on. And second, we see in this passage mankind's inability to think honestly about Christ.

To think honestly about Him. And this is rather interesting. Verse 19, And if I cast, and here's Jesus speaking again, And if I cast out demons by Beelzebub, by whom do your sons cast them out? Therefore, they will be your judges. That is, they'll stand in judgment about your conclusion that I'm casting out demons by Satan. That's a good question.

Yeah, there were, in Jesus' day, some rabbis and scribes and other religious leaders who were participating in so-called exorcisms. Very common in His day.

And these particular individuals, rabbis and such, they believed that this was their calling, that this was their ministry. ministry. And so, Jesus asks, in effect, Are you saying that I am casting out demons by the power of Satan, but your rabbis are casting out demons by the power of God?

[30 : 00] Is that what you're saying? You're not being honest, He's saying. And the point might be lost on us, but some of the Jews that Jesus was speaking to, they would have understood what He was getting at.

You see, the Jewish people knew that what their rabbis were doing was something totally different, I mean, in relation to what Jesus was doing.

I mean, they just didn't even compare. What the rabbis claimed they were doing and making some kind of motion about doing could not be compared to what they had just witnessed Jesus did with this mute man.

And so, Jesus is saying, Be honest. Be honest. Compare what you have observed here today when I cast the demon out of this poor mute man.

Compare that with those rabbis who claim to have the power of God over demons but don't actually have that power. They just don't compare.

[31 : 09] Are you saying, if you're saying that they, in their weak attempt to cast out demons, if you're saying, are you saying that their power, the power of God is not as strong as the power of Satan?

that you claim I'm casting the demons out by? Is that what you're saying? You're not being honest. Remember the sons of Sceva in Acts chapter 19?

It mentioned some rabbis and also the sons of Sceva that were attempting to cast out demons and they said, you know, we've got an idea. We'll just speak the name of Jesus and cast these demons out.

You know, the same way Paul does. That's what they said. And so they attempt to do that. What happens? Demons said, well, we know Jesus and we know Paul, but we don't know who you are. And so the demon jumped out of the demon-possessed guy and tore those guys up.

That's how effective the rabbis were in their casting out of demons. demons. And so Jesus is just simply bringing that to mind. He said, you know, are you saying then that Satan's power, that's what you're saying, that I'm casting demons out by Satan's power, are you saying that Satan's power is greater than God's power?

[32 : 41] See, the depraved man or woman cannot think honestly about Jesus and the claims of Christ. There are people who choose some form of spiritualism.

I mean, there's multiplied thousands of different spiritualism type of religions out there, and so there are people who will choose some form of spiritualism.

Are you kidding? I mean, are you saying that praying to some, quote, spirit guide is more real and more life-satisfying than praying to the God of the Bible?

You're not being honest, not honest with yourself, and there are people who will choose to pray to their ancestors, and worship their ancestors as many people do in the world, in China, for example. Really? Have you thought this thing through? Are you being honest about this? And then there are people who choose Scientology.

[33 : 37] It's one of the latest crazes, at least among some of our Hollywood stars. They'll choose Scientology. That's crazy, if you know anything about it.

Absolutely crazy. There are people who would choose to believe in the God Moroni, the Mormons, and think that someday they too will become gods and have spirit babies and populate their own planet.

Are you kidding me? You're not thinking about this honestly. And it goes on and on from there, but this is the condition of lost humanity.

Mankind's ability to think rationally about Christ. And mankind's inability to think honestly about Christ. And then there's a third one, mankind's inability to think savingly about Christ.

Think savingly about Him. Jesus said in verse 20, If but if I cast out demons by the finger of God, surely the kingdom of God is coming to you. The kingdom of God has come.

[34 : 37] It's come. I am the king. And I'm here. And your salvation has come. All the evidence points to it and proves it.

That's what Jesus was getting at in this little analogy He gives us starting with verse 21. Look at it. In verse 21, when a strong man fully armed guards his own palace, his goods are in peace.

What does that mean? Well, the strong man here is a reference to Satan. So when Satan fully armed, guards his own palace, armed with his demons and such, then his goods are in peace.

That is, there's no threat of losing them. But when a stronger, who would that be? That would be Jesus. When a stronger than he comes upon him and overcomes him, as Jesus was doing, as he was casting out demons everywhere he went.

No demon could stand against him. In fact, in some cases, he didn't even have to say a word.

Overcomes him, he takes from him all his armor in which he trusted and divides his spoils.

[35 : 56] By the way, the spoils, I think, are his souls. They were controlled by Satan and Jesus has come and delivered them. That's what he's getting at here.

The kingdom of God has come, but they did not see it. They did not see it. They see Jesus, and today, unredeemed, unregenerate man, sees Jesus as a mystery, as a conundrum that cannot explain.

I mean, his miracles are undeniable, but they see Jesus only as a troubling threat to their chosen way of life. That's how most people see him. He's an irritant.

He's a spoiler of our plans. He is a revealer of our sins and makes us feel guilty. He stands against our self-rule, but they cannot see him as Savior and depraved, unable to think savingly about Jesus Christ.

Something has to happen to them, and that's God's grace and the power of the gospel. That's what we're going to get to in conclusion.

[37 : 05] Let me move on to the third point. Jesus, thirdly, reveals salvation's authenticity. Salvation's authenticity.

Jesus draws a line in the sand, very clearly, here in verse 23. Draws the line and divides the whole world, all mankind, into two camps.

Not a third or an in-between, but just two. he says in verse 23, he who is not with me is against me, and he who does not gather with me scatters.

There's no middle ground. This is so intolerant. What Jesus said here just won't fly with most people today, especially in this country.

It's just so dogmatic, so black and white. There's no in-between, no middle ground. There are those who belong to God or they belong to Satan. I mean, there are those who are with Christ or those who are against Christ.

[38 : 15] No in-between. There are those who are contributing to the kingdom and those who are working to destroy it. As Adrian Rogers used to say, you are either a saint or an ain't.

There's not any in-between. And so there's no middle ground, no in-between, no on-the-fence kind of position. A lot of people think that they're safe in some kind of in-between, undecided position.

And if you're undecided right now about Christ, guess what? You're against Him. And if you have said, well, I'm just not going to take sides here, I'm going to keep an open mind, and I'm not going to

make a decision one way or the other on this thing, I think that's the safe way to go. Guess what? You're against Christ. You're against Him. and really you're no different than a Satan worshiper if you are not with Christ. Plain and simple.

That's what Jesus said. That's not what I'm saying. That's what Jesus said. And so that's what I'm saying because that's what Jesus said. But what is authentic salvation then?

[39 : 21] Well, I'll tell you what it is not. Or rather we'll let Jesus tell us. It is not a reformation of one's ways.

That's what a lot of people think salvation is. Turning over a new leaf. Changing your ways. It's not that. And it's revealed to us here in verse 24.

Look at what he said in verse 24. When an unclean spirit goes out of a man, you know, how he goes out, he doesn't say.

Maybe one of these false rabbis, exorcists, and so the demon leaves for a while, just to maybe add credibility to their error. But when he goes out, he goes through dry places, seeking rest and finding none.

He says, I'll just return to my house from which I came. It's a great place to live, so I think I'll just go back there. And when he comes, he finds it swept and put in order. That depicts reformation of a life.

[40 : 23] You know, maybe you just wake up one day and say, I'm just going to change my ways and kick the devil out and start disciplining some things in your life.

You stop doing this and start doing this, maybe going to church and you're just kind of reforming, reforming yourself. So it's likened to sweeping the house out, getting all the dirt and cobwebs and all that kind of stuff out of there.

And so he goes back and he finds everything in order. Then he goes and takes with him seven other spirits more wicked than himself and they enter and dwell there and the last state of that man is worse than the first.

Now it's meant to kind of shock us. But the simple idea is that salvation, authentic salvation, does not come by reformation. It doesn't come by your own personal works, your own reforming of your sinful ways and changing that in some way.

And turning over that new leaf and so forth. That's not salvation, not authentic salvation. So what is it? What is authentic salvation according to scripture? Salvation is not a reformation.

[41 : 37] It's a transformation. Not a reformation of one's ways, but a transformation by God's word. By God's word and that's what we're getting at here in the latter part of our text.

Look at verse 27. And it happened as he spoke that a certain woman interrupted him. That's not what it says, that's what I'm reading into it.

She just interrupts. That certain woman from the crowd raised her voice and said to him, blessed is the womb that bore You and the breasts which nursed you!

you and the people who do. But he said, that really doesn't matter. Again, reading between the lines, more than that, much more than that, blessed are those who do what?

Hear the word of God and keep it, obey it. faith. And we can go many other places in scripture and add verses to help explain that, expand upon that, but here's the bottom line.

[42 : 47] the only way that a person can escape the depravity, the complete inability to come to Christ is through the word of God.

Faith comes by hearing and hearing by the word of God. Hearing and obeying. That's not works. That is what God uses to apply to our hearts, to change our hearts. The Holy Spirit regenerates our hearts through his word.

That's authentic salvation. Hearing the word of God and obeying it, doing it. The authenticity of salvation.

God is the one the in the world. The heart of the!

[43 : 57] God of God is the one is the who!!