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Sermon Notes

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Opposites Attack

Matthew 12:22-32

I. The Powerful Sign (vs. 22-23)

vs. 22 Then they brought him a demon-possessed man who was blind and mute, and Jesus healed him, so that he could both talk and see.

A. Satan's Powerful Kingdom Displayed

1. What are demons?

- a. powerful spiritual beings

Ephesians 6:12 For our struggle is not against flesh and blood, but against the rulers, against the authorities, against the powers of this dark world and against the spiritual forces of evil in the heavenly realms.

- b. "The Devil and his angels"

Matthew 25:41 "Then he will say to those on his left, 'Depart from me, you who are cursed, into the eternal fire prepared for the devil and his angels.

Phrase implies Devil was the leader, some angels followed his lead into rebellion

- c. Satan's Kingdom: Powers, Principalities and Demonic Order

Demons are Satan's henchmen, carrying out his dark plots and schemes

2. What is demon-possession?

- a. already seen many examples in Matthew's Gospel

Matthew 4:24 News about him spread all over Syria, and people brought to him all who were ill with various diseases, those suffering severe pain, the demon-possessed, those having seizures, and the paralyzed, and he healed them.

Matthew 8:16 *When evening came, many who were demon-possessed were brought to him, and he drove out the spirits with a word and healed all the sick.*

- b. “possession” is a poor translation of a term “demonize”... but it comes from the sense that the demon spiritually inhabits the person... controls them from within

To be “demonized” means to be so completely under the influence and control of a demon that one is no longer in one’s right mind and can no longer resist demonic will. It may or may not result in physical damage or impairment.

Matthew 12:43-45 *"When an evil spirit comes out of a man, it goes through arid places seeking rest and does not find it. 44 Then it says, 'I will return to the house I left.' When it arrives, it finds the house unoccupied, swept clean and put in order. 45 Then it goes and takes with it seven other spirits more wicked than itself, and they go in and live there. And the final condition of that man is worse than the first. That is how it will be with this wicked generation.*

- c. sometimes multiple spirits can inhabit a person

Luke 8:2... Mary Magdalene had had seven demons cast out from her

- d. casting a demon out of a person is an act of great spiritual power and authority

Mark 1:23-27 *[Capernaum] Just then a man in their synagogue who was possessed by an evil spirit cried out, 24 "What do you want with us, Jesus of Nazareth? Have you come to destroy us? I know who you are-- the Holy One of God!" 25 "Be quiet!" said Jesus sternly. "Come out of him!" 26 The evil spirit shook the man violently and came out of him with a shriek. 27 The people were all so amazed that they asked each other, "What is this? A new teaching-- and with authority! He even gives orders to evil spirits and they obey him."*

Satan’s vast evil empire is populated by demons of incredible power... some are more powerful than others

Illus. Powerful angel in Daniel 10

Daniel 10:4-8 *On the twenty-fourth day of the first month, as I was standing on the bank of the great river, the Tigris, 5 I looked up and there before me was a man dressed in linen, with a belt of the finest gold around his waist. 6 His body was like chrysolite, his face like lightning, his eyes like flaming torches, his arms and legs like the gleam of burnished bronze, and his voice like the sound of a multitude. 7 I, Daniel, was the only one who saw the vision; the men with me did not see it, but such terror overwhelmed them that they fled and hid themselves. 8 So I was left alone, gazing at*

this great vision; I had no strength left, my face turned deathly pale and I was helpless

The angel explains that he had been dispatched to answer Daniel's prevailing prayer immediately, but something interfered with his progress...

Daniel 10:13 But the prince of the Persian kingdom resisted me twenty-one days. Then Michael, one of the chief princes, came to help me, because I was detained there with the king of Persia.

Amazing!! This awesome angel with incredible power and a fierce warrior-like demeanor, was withstood for twenty-one days by "The King of Persia"... and he could not get past him until another angel, an Archangel named Michael, came and assisted him!!

Thus demons have incredible power

- e. Implication: Total human powerlessness

It is obvious, then, that human beings could have no power to survive demonic presence were it not for God's power

Illus. Luther's "A Mighty Fortress is Our God"

"For still our ancient foe, doth seek to work us woe. His craft and power are great, and armed with cruel hate... on earth is not His equal.

Did we in our own strength confide, our striving would be losing... were not the right Man on our side, the Man of God's own choosing. Dost ask who that may be? Christ Jesus it is He!! Lord Sabaoth His name! From age to age the same! And He must win the battle.

3. Are there different types and effects of demon-possession?

- a. the Demoniac of the Gadarenes... the most vicious of all

vs. 28 When he arrived at the other side in the region of the Gadarenes, two demon-possessed men coming from the tombs met him. They were so violent that no one could pass that way.

- b. other places, demons caused seizures and fits
- c. but here... the demon has made the man blind and mute
- d. furthermore, the man could be led meekly and quietly into Jesus' presence

vs. 22 Then they brought him a demon-possessed man who was blind and mute, and Jesus healed him, so that he could both talk and see.

Other demons would thrash and wail upon coming into Jesus' presence

This demon probably wasn't as powerful as the leader of the Legion of demons inside the demoniac of the Gadarenes

B. Jesus Heals the Man Completely

1. It doesn't say how
2. In most cases, He drove out spirits with a mere word... overcoming them by the breath of His mouth
3. However, after Jesus healed him, all of the man's faculties were restored perfectly
4. An incredible display of power

Remember: before Jesus, no one had ever healed a blind man before. That sign was reserved in a special way for Jesus Christ

This was, in effect, three miracles in one... at one instant, a demon was driven out... blind eyes could see, a mute tongue could speak

John MacArthur went beyond the text and speculated that the man was also deaf, as deafness and muteness frequently went together. If so...

Charles Wesley's "O For a Thousand Tongues to Sing" could be experienced quite fully by this man:

"Hear Him, ye deaf; His praise, ye dumb, your loosened tongues employ; ye blind behold your Savior come; and leap, ye lame, for joy!!"

C. Crowd's Astonished Question

"All the people were astonished..."

1. Greek word very strong... literally "to stand outside of yourself"
2. A sense of the immense presence of God in this miracle

Illus. Martyn Lloyd-Jones preaching... finished, silence for half an hour after he completed

3. Question: "This man cannot be the Son of David, can He?" (NASB has it right)
 - a. "Son of David" = Messiah

- b. question assumes that Christ is NOT the Messiah... but the people are at least open enough to ask the question
- c. later, this kind of question could get you put out of the synagogue

John 9:22 His parents said this because they were afraid of the Jews, for already the Jews had decided that anyone who acknowledged that Jesus was the Christ would be put out of the synagogue.

II. The Pharisees' Accusation (vs. 24)

A. Cornered Animals Lash Out

John Piper: Discussing Jesus' interaction with the Samaritan woman at the well. After Jesus confronted her with her lifestyle of sin, she changed the subject and began to discuss rules for worship. Piper wrote:

"A trapped animal will chew off its own leg to escape. A trapped sinner will mangle her own mind and rip up rules of logic. 'Why yes, as long as we are talking about my adultery, what is your stance on where people should attend worship?' This is standard evasive double talk for trapped sinners." [Piper, *Desiring God*, p. 64]

BUT what the Samaritan woman did to evade the force of Jesus' probing concerning her sinful lifestyle, the Pharisees did to their own logic and theology to evade the force of Jesus' obvious display of supernatural power:

vs. 24 But when the Pharisees heard this, they said, "It is only by Beelzebub, the prince of demons, that this fellow drives out demons."

When they heard the crowd speculate concerning whether or not Jesus was the Son of David, they were forced to respond

BUT THEY HAD NO GOOD ANSWER!!! So they mangled their minds and destroyed their theology to keep Jesus on the evil side

B. Who Is "Beelzebub"?

1. Literally "Lord of the flies" or perhaps "Lord of dung"
2. Figuratively refers to Satan
3. Accusation: Christ's healings are all a display of Satanic power, a gigantic ruse
4. Theologically plausible in one sense:

- a. Exodus: Jannes and Jambres, Pharaoh's magicians, were able to duplicate at a small scale God's first two plagues
- b. Deuteronomy 13

Deuteronomy 13:1-5 If a prophet, or one who foretells by dreams, appears among you and announces to you a miraculous sign or wonder, 2 and if the sign or wonder of which he has spoken takes place, and he says, "Let us follow other gods" (gods you have not known) "and let us worship them," 3 you must not listen to the words of that prophet or dreamer. The LORD your God is testing you to find out whether you love him with all your heart and with all your soul. 4 It is the LORD your God you must follow, and him you must revere. Keep his commands and obey him; serve him and hold fast to him. 5 That prophet or dreamer must be put to death, because he preached rebellion against the LORD your God

- c. End of the world: Antichrist will have miracle-working power

2 Thessalonians 2:9 The coming of the lawless one will be in accordance with the work of Satan displayed in all kinds of counterfeit miracles, signs and wonders,

Revelation 16:13-14 Then I saw three evil spirits that looked like frogs; they came out of the mouth of the dragon, out of the mouth of the beast and out of the mouth of the false prophet. They are spirits of demons performing miraculous signs

C. Deadly Serious Accusation

1. The battle line has been drawn between Christ and the Pharisees... there's no going back from this point on
2. In a moment, Christ will describe to them the unforgivable sin, and will tell them that they will have to give an account for their words

D. Phariseeic Logic: A Major Flaw in Assumption

1. Major premise: we are godly, and so is anyone who follows our rules and regulations
2. Corollary: anyone who opposes us or breaks our rules is ungodly and wicked
3. FACT: Jesus of Nazareth breaks our Sabbath regulations, and doesn't keep the traditions of the elders
4. Conclusion #1: Therefore, Jesus of Nazareth is ungodly and wicked

5. Second major premise: there are only two possible sources of supernatural power... God and the Devil (Beelzebub)
6. FACT: Jesus of Nazareth has just demonstrated supernatural power that cannot be denied
7. BUT (as proved above) Jesus of Nazareth is ungodly and wicked
8. Conclusion #2: Therefore, it is by Beelzebub, the Prince of Demons that He drives out demons.

What is the overall flaw? Actually only one single mistake in all of this!! Assuming they were godly and that anyone who opposed them was ungodly. Their self-righteousness blinded them to the obvious conclusion... Jesus was God in the flesh. Because they wanted pridefully to maintain their own righteousness, they HAD to oppose Jesus. Thus the conclusion, however blasphemous, was inevitable.

Jesus did miracles by the power of the Devil. And for that conclusion they would never be forgiven... in fact, they are not now forgiven.

III. Jesus' Defense (vs. 25-28)

Matthew 12:25-26 Jesus knew their thoughts and said to them, "Every kingdom divided against itself will be ruined, and every city or household divided against itself will not stand." If Satan drives out Satan, he is divided against himself. How then can his kingdom stand?

Note: Matthew establishes Christ's supernatural ability to read minds here. This is a repeated theme in the Gospels as again and again it is clear that the thoughts of other people lay open before Christ

A. Using Logic: "A Kingdom Divided Against Itself Cannot Stand"

1. Common knowledge: any kingdom which destroys itself and gnaws on its vitals will VERY SOON expire

Illus. Civil war... divided factions; a king dies and has two sons; the kingdom is rent in two by bloody warfare; European history splashed with the blood of "Wars of succession" **EXAMPLE???????**

The American Civil War is still the bloodiest war in the history of our nation

Abraham Lincoln quoted Christ's words here in discussing the deep division in our young nation over slavery when accepting the Republican nomination for U.S. Senate from Illinois in June of 1858.

"A HOUSE DIVIDED AGAINST ITSELF CANNOT STAND." I BELIEVE THIS GOVERNMENT CANNOT ENDURE PERMANENTLY HALF SLAVE AND HALF FREE. I DO NOT EXPECT THE UNION TO BE DISSOLVED -- I DO NOT EXPECT THE HOUSE TO FALL -- BUT I DO EXPECT IT WILL CEASE TO BE DIVIDED. IT WILL BECOME ALL ONE THING, OR ALL THE OTHER.

Modern Civil Wars have ravaged one nation after another: 1) Chechnya 2) Rwanda 3) Tajikistan 4) The Sudan

These wars leave immense suffering, starvation, disease, death... and threaten to destroy the very existence of the nation itself

2. Christ's point: not that Satan is not capable of a ruse, or a deception
3. BUT they miss the scale of devastation that Christ is doing to Satan's Kingdom

“Every Kingdom divided against itself is (literally) left totally desolate, like a desert

- a. demons are being violently driven out of people all over Galilee and Judea
- b. demonic illness are being completely reversed on a scale never before seen: huge crowds of blind, deaf, lame, leprous, and even dead people are being restored to health with a single word
- c. even more significantly: hardened sinners are being brought to repentance... like tax collectors and prostitutes, and are living God-fearing lives again
- d. Satan kingdom is being ravaged from Dan to Beersheba... He is being routed, totally devastated

Illus. CIA agent during Cold War; loyalty to Communist country tested severely if they put a gun in his hand, then bring in another CIA agent and say “If you're loyal to us, then kill this man.” It would be possibly conceivable that a man still loyal to his country would kill his fellow countryman to maintain his cover as a spy... although it would be very hard to imagine. But suppose the Communist interrogators said “If you're loyal to us, then launch this nuclear missile at Washington D.C.”

A ruse is a ruse, a fake is a fake... but what good would Satan's Kingdom be if when he was done with the miraculous charade, it was totally destroyed? That is Christ's logic

1 John 3:8 The reason the Son of God appeared was to destroy the devil's work.

B. Using Experience: “By Whom Do Your Sons Drive Out Demons?”

vs. 27 And if I drive out demons by Beelzebub, by whom do your people drive them out? So then, they will be your judges.

1. “Your sons” = “your followers”, “your disciples”
2. Possibly Jesus is pointing out that the Pharisees disciples aren't driving any demons out at all!! So they have no miracles to show their dominance over Satan

3. More probably, Jesus is alluding to the occasional act of demon exorcism done by some Jews

Acts 19: Seven sons of Sceva tried to cast out a demon and they were thrashed by the man

Acts 19:13-16 Some Jews who went around driving out evil spirits tried to invoke the name of the Lord Jesus over those who were demon-possessed. They would say, "In the name of Jesus, whom Paul preaches, I command you to come out." 14 Seven sons of Sceva, a Jewish chief priest, were doing this. 15 One day the evil spirit answered them, "Jesus I know, and I know about Paul, but who are you?" 16 Then the man who had the evil spirit jumped on them and overpowered them all. He gave them such a beating that they ran out of the house naked and bleeding.

4. This is an argument from experience and from fairplay

"If any of your disciples drove out demons, would you not automatically use this as evidence that God was at work in your ministry? 'Look what my disciple did! I must truly be a teacher from God!' Why then do you deprive me of the glory of my person for this great miracle? Your own disciples will be your judges on Judgment Day when they testify that your experience of their exorcisms should have enabled you to acknowledge God at work in my ministry!!"

C. Using Power: "The Kingdom of God is Upon You!"

v. 28 But if I drive out demons by the Spirit of God, then the kingdom of God has come upon you.

1. This is in effect a warning! It fits into the following section in which He challenges the Pharisees opposition to the Kingdom of God
2. Note that Jesus accepts the same basic worldview they had: a miracle like this could only have come from the Kingdom of God or the kingdom of Satan
3. Jesus gives clear testimony that His miracles were all done by the power of the Holy Spirit

Luke 4:18-19 "The Spirit of the Lord is on me, because he has anointed me to preach good news to the poor. He has sent me to proclaim freedom for the prisoners and recovery of sight for the blind, to release the oppressed, to proclaim the year of the Lord's favor."

Jesus is advancing the Kingdom with the mighty power of the Holy Spirit... these miracles were great evidence that the Kingdom of God was HERE NOW

"Kingdom of God is upon you" = either in blessing or in judgment, one or the other

4. NOTE: very important teaching about the Kingdom of God

- a. it has already come!! It was here when Christ came, doing these miracles, He said "The Kingdom of God has come upon you!"
- b. it is not yet here:

"Our Father in heaven, hallowed be your name. Your Kingdom come, your will be done on earth as it is in heaven..."

IV. Binding the Strong Man, Plundering His Kingdom (vs. 29)

vs. 29 "Or again, how can anyone 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.

In effect, Christ is here explaining why He is driving out demons

The Kingdom of God can advance only by taking back lost territory from Satan's Kingdom

The growth of the Kingdom is an act of spiritual violence, of spiritual conquest... it can only be accomplished by superior power, for the devil will fight it every step of the way

A. The Kingdom of God Is Advancing Forcefully

1. Christ HAS bound the strong man!! The Kingdom of God IS advancing forcefully

Christ likens His mission to that of a house-burglar... or better, to an invading King

2. Christ's incredible miracles and the power of the gospel message He proclaimed caused the Kingdom to advance forcefully

B. The Kingdom of Satan is Fighting Violently

1. Satan considers that the world and everything in it is his

Luke 4:5-7 The devil led him up to a high place and showed him in an instant all the kingdoms of the world. And he said to him, "I will give you all their authority and splendor, for it has been given to me, and I can give it to anyone I want to. So if you worship me, it will all be yours."

2. He dominates this place with his malicious tyrannical rule
3. Therefore Satan is called the “god of this world”

2 Corinthians 4:4 ... the god of this world has blinded the minds of the unbelieving so that they might not see the light of the gospel of the glory of Christ, who is the image of God.

4. Satan maintains His possessions by force and by deceit...

His “possessions” are people... by corrupting their souls, he holds them in bondage to sin and death

C. Christ is Stronger!!!

1. Satan cannot stop the advance of the Kingdom!!
2. He cannot stop Jesus from driving out demons... in fact, the demons are absolutely terrified of Jesus
3. He cannot stop Jesus from healing sick people, opening blind eyes, clearing deaf ears, extending shriveled hands

Illus. Jesus healed a woman on a Sabbath in the synagogue from being a cripple, totally bent over

Luke 13:16 Then should not this woman, a daughter of Abraham, whom Satan has kept bound for eighteen long years, be set free on the Sabbath day from what bound her?"

Satan would like to have kept her bound and bent over... but Jesus said “Woman, you are loosed!!” and she was free from that moment on!!

Oh, the glorious power of the Advancing Kingdom of God!!!!!!!!!!!!!!!!!!!!

D. Satan is Plundered

1. Satan held the world in the power of sin and death... people were under his same sentence of hell... eternal death in the lake of fire on judgment day

Destined to hear the most dreadful sentence ever uttered:

“Depart from me, you who are cursed, into the eternal fire prepared for the devil and his angels.”

2. We were Satan’s possessions... doing his will; deceived by sin, and deceiving others; and he guarded us well!!!

Luke 11:21-22 "When a strong man, fully armed, guards his own house, his possessions are safe. 22 But when someone stronger attacks and overpowers him, he takes away the armor in which the man trusted and divides up the spoils.

3. We were rescued by overwhelmingly superior force, and brought out... and there was nothing Satan could do to stop it!!!
4. Satan's greatest defeat came at the cross, when Christ stood under the devil's dark, murderous, hateful scheme, and even more, under God's righteous wrath for our sins

Satan was destroyed at the cross... but Christ has been taking His sweet time in finishing off the final victory

For two thousand years, Christ has been plundering Satan's house... taking one generation of people after another from his vile bloody wicked grip

That's how you got saved!!! Christ bound the devil, came into his house... or better, invaded his kingdom, and rescued you

Colossians 1:13-14 For he has rescued us from the dominion of darkness and brought us into the kingdom of the Son he loves, in whom we have redemption, the forgiveness of sins.

E. Millennial Questions

1. One last detail about the binding of Satan...
2. Revelation 20 says that Satan will be bound for one thousand years...

Revelation 20:1-3 And I saw an angel coming down out of heaven, having the key to the Abyss and holding in his hand a great chain. 2 He seized the dragon, that ancient serpent, who is the devil, or Satan, and bound him for a thousand years. 3 He threw him into the Abyss, and locked and sealed it over him, to keep him from deceiving the nations anymore until the thousand years were ended. After that, he must be set free for a short time.

Some interpreters, called 'amillennial' believe that the millennium is not meant to be taken literally, but is merely figurative in the book of Revelation for a long period of binding... they say that the binding Revelation 20 speaks of is for a specific purpose: "to keep him from deceiving the nations anymore". They link the verb "deo" which means "to tie up" or "to bind" with the exact same verb found here in our passage, and say the "millennium" has been going on with the advance of the gospel for the last two thousand years

The devil has not been permitted to thwart the advance of the gospel, to deceive the elect... and so people are being saved from every tribe, language, people, and nation.

This is all true, I believe, but I have come to reject the amillennial interpretation of Revelation 20. I think since Revelation 18-22 reads in a chronological flow, Revelation 20 must take place after the Second Coming of Christ, depicted in Revelation 19.

YET we can rejoice that the "binding" of Matthew 12:29 HAS been going on for 2000 years, and that it is the very way Christ rescued you from Satan's evil kingdom

V. Applications

1. Stand in awe at the divine power of Christ

there is no disease He cannot cure

there is no demon too powerful for Him to drive out

there is no mind He cannot read

there is no false concept He cannot refute

there is no power the devil can muster to stop Him

2. **Understand** how **Christ's** Kingdom advances only by power and **conquest**

NOT by physical conquest... not by the sword, by nations advancing militarily

BUT by spiritual conquest in the heavenly realms... by the binding Christ alone can do of the strong man

Know that no one can be saved except that Christ bind the devil from deceiving the person

Know that missionaries have frequently experienced the incredible intensity of the spiritual conflict in the advance of the Kingdom of Light against the Kingdom of Darkness

Know also that no progress can be made in this church, in Durham, in your family, in your own soul, except by the awesome power of Christ through the Spirit

BUT understand the binding is done by CHRIST at His will... we are merely His servants

3. See the terribly destructive power of **self-righteousness**

the Pharisees ascribed Christ's miracles to Beelzebub because they were so confident of their own righteousness

it ultimately damned their souls to hell

BEWARE the same thing doesn't happen to you!!

COME TO CHRIST!! Let Him rescue you from Satan's dreadful power and even more terrible fate

4. **Rejoice** and give thanks for your **salvation**

Christ came and rescued you

Never get tired of thanking Him for that

5. Get busy in **advancing the Kingdom**... it is undefeated and undefeatable!!!

Warfare prayer!!!

Warfare Witnessing!!