

THE HAND OF THE LORD WHO CASTS OUT DEMONS

March 16, 2025

Luke 9:37-43 ³⁷ Now it happened on the next day, when they had come down from the mountain, that a great multitude met Him. ³⁸ Suddenly a man from the multitude cried out, saying, "Teacher, I implore You, look on my son, for he is my only child. ³⁹ "And behold, a spirit seizes him, and he suddenly cries out; it convulses him so that he foams *at the mouth*, and it departs from him with great difficulty, bruising him. ⁴⁰ "So I implored Your disciples to cast it out, but they could not." ⁴¹ Then Jesus answered and said, "O faithless and perverse generation, how long shall I be with you and bear with you? Bring your son here." ⁴² And as he was still coming, the demon threw him down and convulsed *him*. Then Jesus rebuked the unclean spirit, healed the child, and gave him back to his father. ⁴³ And they were all amazed at the majesty of God.

In his hymn A Mighty Fortress is Our God, Martin Luther reminds us that

3. Though devils all the world should fill, All eager to devour us.

We often underestimate the power and strength of Satan. We don't really take him seriously. In our text this morning Jesus compares Satan to a strong man guarding his house. No one can come in and take that which he guards. Unfortunately, we are that which he guards. By nature all people are under the power of Satan.

A couple weeks ago we heard in the temptation of Jesus, Satan say "all this has been given to me." In one sense that was a lie, but in another it was true.

Jesus himself calls Satan

John 12:31 the ruler of this world

The apostle Paul calls him the

2Co 4:4 the god of this age

In verse two of his Hymn Martin Luther reminds us

With might of ours can naught be done

Satan is the strong man against whom we have not chance of victory. And yet Martin continues in his hymn

**We tremble not, we fear no ill,
They shall not overpower us.**

Why? Because **“for us fights the Valiant One.”**

Even though Satan is the strong man, Jesus is the stronger one who has come to overthrow Satan. We have no chance on our own, yet one finger of the hand of God is enough to cast out Satan and deliver us from bondage.

We are not strong enough on our own.

We have two examples in our text of those who thought they could take Satan on their own, but could not.

In the first part of our text, a father brings his child to Jesus’ disciples. The disciples could not cast out this demon. The text doesn't tell us why, but scripture gives us two hints. The first is Jesus’ response about a faithless and perverse generation. The second comes from Mark's gospel where Jesus tells his disciples that "this type come out only through prayer." These verse imply that the disciples were too focused on their own strength or the strength of their own faith. They were not strong enough to defeat on their own.

This last Wednesday we heard how Peter got out of the boat and at first was able to walk on the water. However, the sight of the wind and waves caused him to lose his faith and sink. Peter's faith was not strong enough even to deal with the wind and the waves. If his faith wasn't strong enough to deal with the waves what chance did the disciples have against a demon?

Regardless of why they could not, the one thing that is clear in our text is that God alone has the power to cast out demons. The hands of the disciples were not strong enough, therefore Jesus directed them towards prayer. In contrast to the disciples failure, Jesus reminds us that one finger of God's hand can easily cast out Satan.

The apostle Paul reminds us

Ephesians 6:12-13 For we do not wrestle against flesh and blood, but against principalities, against powers, against the rulers of the darkness of this age, against

spiritual hosts of wickedness in the heavenly places. Therefore, take up the whole armor of God,

Just as Peter failed on the water, just as the disciples failed while Jesus was on the mountain, so also, we often fail because we forget that our hands can do nothing and therefore what we need above all else is prayer and the word of God. The best use of our hands is not to engage in wrestling with Satan but folded in prayer to God who alone is able to give us the victory through Jesus Christ our Lord.

Every time we think we have things covered that we can handle ourselves, the result is the same as what happened to the disciples in our text. Satan laughs at us. There is nothing that Satan likes better than to find us thinking we can handle it on our own, or thinking our faith is strong enough. When we trust in our own abilities or strength, we are easy marks.

Peter reminds us:

1 Peter 5:8 your adversary the devil walks about like a roaring lion, seeking whom he may devour

Yet despite our lack of strength, we do not need to fear Satan. "For us fights the valiant one." Jesus did not even need his whole hand, but with one finger he destroys Satan.

The second example of those who fail because they trust their own strength are the Jews who accuse Jesus of working with Satan. These are men who thought themselves dedicated and faithful believers in God. They were confident in their own faith. They were so confident that they insisted it must be Jesus who was of Satan. Jesus proves that he is greater than Satan and not under his sway. Jesus shows by his power that God's kingdom had come among them.

Jesus shows that it is this very pride in themselves that brought them completely under the power of Satan.

Proverbs 16:18-19 18 Pride goes before destruction, And a haughty spirit before a fall. 19 Better to be of a humble spirit with the lowly, Than to divide the spoil with the proud.

It is so easy to become complacent in our faith, to think my faith has never been stronger. "I always go to church. I know all the Sunday school lessons." As soon as we start thinking about what I am or what I have done, we are opening the door to Satan. It's like we are challenging Satan to an arm-wrestling match. Satan is happy to oblige us, and we will lose.

Two weeks ago, our Ash Wednesday service was focused on what do we bring in our hands. The answer is nothing. We bring nothing. Nothing in my hands I bring, only to thy cross I cling.

We are not strong enough, which is why we can only win through Jesus.

In contrast to the disciples and the Jews both of whom fail because they are trusting in themselves, we see Jesus, who with a single word casts out both demons with ease. He tells the Jews, "**I cast out demons with the finger of God.**" With only one finger God is able to do what we cannot with all of our strength. With just one finger Jesus destroys Satan's kingdom, and we know that the kingdom of God has come upon us.