

Scripture Reading

A Reading of the Gospel According to Luke (*Luke 11:20-26*)

[Jesus said:] But if I drive out demons by the finger of God, then the kingdom of God has come upon you. When a strong man, fully armed, guards his own house, his possessions are safe. But when someone stronger attacks and overpowers him, he takes away the armour in which the man trusted and divides up his plunder. Whoever is not with Me is against Me, and whoever does not gather with Me scatters. When an impure spirit comes out of a person, it goes through arid places seeking rest and does not find it. Then it says, 'I will return to the house I left.' When it arrives, it finds the house swept clean and put in order. Then it goes and takes seven other spirits more wicked than itself, and they go in and live there. And the final condition of that person is worse than the first. The Gospel of the Lord. R. Praise to You Lord Jesus Christ.

Reflection ~ In the spiritual realm, we are either for God or against Him

Whoever is not with Me is against Me (Luke 11:23). Jesus reminds us that there are only two kingdoms: His Kingdom of light and Satan's kingdom of darkness which will finally reside in hell. There is no third kingdom or another heaven for non-believers. Non-believers who reject Jesus as Lord and Saviour will belong to the kingdom of darkness. No one can be saved by his/her good deeds alone as sin is a spiritual offence against God which can be washed away only by the blood of God's Son, Jesus Christ. There is only one God whose signature is in all creation, evident in the same basic building blocks that build up the simplest to the most complex creature. We have to decide which kingdom we want to belong to. We cannot belong to both.

Today I am giving you a choice. You can choose life and success or death and disaster (Deuteronomy 30:15). Moses set the case clearly to the Israelites before they cross the River Jordan into the land promised to them by the Lord. He reminded and exhorted them to remain loyal to the Lord at a time before the people encounter new situations, new cultures and religious practises, new trials. The Lord is the source of all life, and His blessings are needed for the Israelites' success in their new environment. To cut themselves off from the Lord and to embrace other pagan practices is to invite death and disaster, cutting themselves off from the Lord's blessings. This too applies to our situation. We have to decide daily to live for the Lord or to be driven by our own desires and passions in following the calling of the secular world.

In the spiritual battle, there is no neutrality. Even though He sacrificed His life for us, Jesus does not force our decision. He respects our freewill as it is His precious gift to us. If we are neutral, He will not take us. But Satan will! Satan and the evil spirits do not respect neutrality in a soul. They are out to grab as many souls as possible to lead them to eternal damnation. They do this to spite God whom they hate so much but cannot touch. Thus, even after being driven out of a soul, they will try to return to the soul that has not fully given itself to the Lordship of Jesus. A house that is only swept clean is clean only superficially reflecting a heart that has renounced evil but still has some neutrality.

Whoever does not gather with Me scatters (Luke 11:23). In the spiritual battle, we either help souls to come closer to God or let them fall further away. From the day we were born to our last day on earth, we are in spiritual battle. There is much at stake. We need to do our level best in spiritual battle. Heaven and hell exist and they last forever. Reflecting our role in the spiritual battle, in Baptism, we are conferred with a share of Christ's mission as priest, prophet and king for the Kingdom of God. Clearly, the mission is of the highest level, to help Christ save all souls for God's Kingdom. If we do not do our part in this shared mission, the souls that are entrusted to us to be saved slipped away through our inaction. Satan and his demons work diligently to snatch as many souls as possible and plan all kinds of cunning traps and temptations.

Conversation with Jesus

Precious Lord, we know that to win a battle, one needs to know the enemy and be well prepared for battle. Satan is like a hungry lion, waiting and watching for an opportunity to devour me. May I always be vigilant and stay away from temptation by abiding in holy truth and holy love. May I do battle like a child of God would and help You win many souls for Your glorious kingdom which You have created for Your beloved children. Help me put on God's armour: clothed, supported and strengthened in truth, righteousness, faith, readiness to go where your Gospel leads, acceptance of Your salvation, and the use of the Word of God (cf. Ephesians 6:13-17). Mary, Mother of Salvation, I consecrate my soul to You so that it will belong to Jesus for all eternity. Thank You Jesus. Praise You Jesus. www.twoheart5.hk