

ON THE WAY TO JERUSALEM JESUS HEALS A MUTE MAN

Luke 11:14-28

Key Verse: 11:20

"But if I drive out demons by the finger of God, then the kingdom of God has come to you."

As we know well, Jesus was on the way to Jerusalem to suffer much and to die on the cross for the sin of the world. In his humanness, Jesus had to make a new decision when he took every other step toward Jerusalem. Jesus needed to renew God's will for world salvation. For this he should shed his blood as a ransom for many. For Jesus, going up to Jerusalem was like a lamb going to the slaughter (Is 53:7). But in this passage, we learn that Jesus did not overlook a helpless person: Jesus healed a mute man. This event shows us that Jesus is the God of comfort. Jesus was severely persecuted by the religious leaders. Mark's gospel says that they were scribes. Matthew's gospel says that they were Pharisees. But Luke didn't say who they were. Their persecutions came from their raving madness. Nevertheless, Jesus taught them the way to the kingdom of God so that they might somehow come back to God.

First, Jesus heals a mute man (14).

This mute man was a miserable man. As we know, a mute man is also deaf. There are many people who say, "You are a dummy." It means, "You are mute and deaf and a most miserable person in the world." A man is a man because he can speak. A man is a man because he can sing. Dr. Rabchuk has sung "Moscow Nights" for the last five years, more than 20 times as a prayer for Russian souls. For the wedding last Friday night he was practicing nearly three hours non-stop and he was happy to sing "Moscow Nights" as his prayer for Russian souls. How nice it is to sing a song with a beautiful sound! But this man could not sing because he was mute. How beautiful it is to hear Brahms' Hungarian dance from number 1 to 21! When we hear classical music, we feel that our emotional feelings are well balanced and we also feel that we are a kind of noble man and woman. This is the reason people buy Handel's

"Messiah" or Tchaikovsky's violin concertos. This is the reason many people watch "Romeo and Juliet" repeatedly in order to enjoy their romantic narrations. It is also mysterious to hear the sound of falling leaves and the sound of flowing streams of water of a brook.

Even if there are many beautiful things in the world, they are beyond comparison to the heavenly things. Among them, to hear the story of Jesus is the most beautiful. Down through the generations, millions of people were oppressed and captured by fear. Many people were in distress and fear. Then they recited Matthew 11:28-30. It says, "Come to me, all you who are weary and burdened, and I will give you rest. Take my yoke upon you and learn from me, for I am gentle and humble in heart, and you will find rest for your souls. For my yoke is easy and my burden is light." So many people in history, at times, felt empty. Then they heard the word of God which says, "For, 'All men are like grass, and all their glory is like the flowers of the field; the grass withers and the flowers fall, but the word of the Lord stands forever'" (1Pe 1:24,25a). Through the word of God they renewed their view of life and the world again and again. In the course of living, people come to the conclusion that man's life is too short and their investment is too great. They feel nothingness. But they can hear the word of God in the Bible. John 3:16 says, "For God so loved the world that he gave his one and only Son, that whoever believes in him shall not perish but have eternal life."

One day Jesus was pressing forward to Jerusalem with his disciples and some other disciples. Jesus passed by a certain place. Jesus saw a mute and deaf man there. He looked as if he were a piece of wooden log. He had no idea to talk to anybody. He was physically mute and deaf, he was also spiritually mute and deaf. The worst part of his life was that he underestimated himself increasingly as he was getting older. Probably he was living a life of self-condemnation. At the moment Jesus saw him, his heart went out to him. To Jesus, he was a good boy made in the image of God, and if he were not a mute man he would have been a successful man with God-given creativity and ability and would have achieved every possible human desire he had had. On his way to Jerusalem, Jesus healed a mute man. Praise God!

Jesus did not see that his muteness was caused by closure of the air passage, but by demon possession. Because of demon possession, this young

man could not call his mother, "Mom," even though he loved his mother as himself. Because of demon possession, this man looked as if he were a piece of wood or a wilted vegetable. He did not ask for Jesus' mercy. But it did not matter to Jesus. Jesus immediately drove out a demon from him. When the demon left, the man who had been mute spoke and the crowd was amazed. He spoke up, "Thank you, Jesus, that you cared for this sorrowful man. You are the God of compassion." Next, he turned toward his mom, and cried with a loud voice. Then he said, "Mom, thank you, thank you, mom." People around him felt as if they were in a paradise. One of them said, "God has come to help his people" (7:16).

Second, the finger of God (15-23).

In this part, Jesus teaches the religious leaders the way to the kingdom of God. Look at verse 15. "But some of them said, 'By Beelzebub, the prince of demons, he is driving out demons.'" According to Matthew and Mark, they were the Pharisees and scribes (Mt 12:24; Mk 3:22). When they saw Jesus caring for a mute and deaf man, they despised him, saying, "This man even cares for a dummy! He doesn't know anything about the strata of society. He has compassion, but he does not know anything about politics. He is going to add this dummy to the twelve disciples." But their most serious cynicism was that Jesus drove out the demon by Beelzebub, the prince of demons.

In their minds is the confused picture of Satan empowering Jesus to cast out Satan's subjects. Look at verse 15. "But some of them said, 'By Beelzebub, the prince of demons, he is driving out demons.'" Jesus saw that they were under the power of sin and death. Hatred toward Jesus was the exact picture of themselves that they were murderers (Jn 8:44). The original meaning of "Beelzebub" may well be "the house." When time passed by, its nuance changed. "Beelzebub" was known as the lord of oozing flies or the heaps of dung. Later it implied the prince of demons.

Jesus kindly talked with them. Look at verses 17-18. "Any kingdom divided against itself will be ruined, and a house divided against itself will fall. If Satan is divided against himself, how can his kingdom stand? I say this because you claim that I drive out demons by Beelzebub." Here Jesus crystal clearly teaches them that he belongs to the kingdom of God and they belong to the

kingdom of Satan. If Jesus works for Satan, as they say, it is to destroy the agents of Satan, demons and the devil. They are not attacking Jesus, but they are attacking themselves. These religious leaders are suffering from being scatterbrained.

For example, the Egyptian magicians under king Pharaoh could perform, to some degree, some magic before Moses and Aaron. Then King Pharaoh's heart was hardened. He decided to contest with God to the end. However, after the plague of gnats (Ex 8:19), Pharaoh's magicians could not perform any more magic with their magic arts. But Pharaoh, in his illusion, thought that his magicians could do all that Moses and Aaron did. As a result, King Pharaoh liberated the Israelites only after he experienced the death plague which killed all the firstborn in Egypt. In short, Pharaoh could not distinguish between his witches and Moses and Aaron. The Pharisees did not recognize Jesus as the Son of God and called him Beelzebub and said that Jesus' healing of the mute man was done by the power of Beelzebub (19).

Look at verse 20. "But if I drive out demons by the finger of God, then the kingdom of God has come to you." Jesus had mercy on them. So he said, "I drove out the mute demon with the finger of God, not by the power of Beelzebub. And if you believe that I drove out the mute demon with the finger of God, the kingdom of God has come to you" (20). Here, Luke uses present perfect tense. Jesus urges them to repent of their stubbornness and accept the Messiah's work. Then they would see the kingdom of God and they could enter the kingdom of God. Jesus was indeed compassionate, even toward the crooked Pharisees and Sadducees.

Look at verses 21-22. "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 armor in which the man trusted and divides up the spoils." In these verses, a strong man is Jesus himself. Look at verse 23. "He who is not with me is against me, and he who does not gather with me, scatters." It is very clear. Those who do not hear Jesus' word cannot be the children of God. The point of this verse is that Jesus is the strong man, the Son of Almighty God. Therefore, they must repent and come to him.

Third, empty and clean house (24-26).

These three verses teach us a very important spiritual lesson. Jesus knew the legalistic and ritualistic Jews of the time. They tried to keep themselves clean. So they cleaned themselves as they washed the dishes and lived a legalistic way of life. Thus they cleaned their house. But this kind of legalistic way of life cannot save them from evil. Jesus told us a parable here. An evil spirit was bored to live in a man-house all by himself. He left the man-house in the afternoon. It became dark. He had no place to go. And he was afraid to go back to the "cleaner place." So he brought several other evil spirits, more wicked than himself. They went in and lived there. The final condition of that man is worse than the first (26). One should not be proud that he is a clean-cut young man. Here Jesus is saying that man wants to keep himself aloof, self-righteous, ritualistic and moralistic. It works for a few minutes. But many demons can occupy him any minute and the final situation will be worse. What can we do, then? Jesus strongly urges that we must fill up our souls with the word of God so that there is no leftover place for the devil. In the ancient time, many saints memorized Revelation every morning as a warm up for Bible study. Even if we cannot memorize Revelation and Genesis to Leviticus, we must have even one word of God in our hearts. We like St. Augustine. But he didn't have much word of God, only two verses of the Bible, Romans 13:13,14. It says, "Let us behave decently, as in the daytime, not in orgies and drunkenness, not in sexual immorality and debauchery, not in dissension and jealousy. Rather, clothe yourselves with the Lord Jesus Christ, and do not think about how to gratify the desires of the sinful nature." When he held on to this word of God wholeheartedly, God raised him as a saint of the time, from an intellectual hedonist.

Fourth, blessed are those who hear the word of God (27-28).

One woman secretly followed Jesus and saw the great work of God through Jesus. Jesus healed a mute and deaf man and made him sing "Moscow Nights," "Mom," and "Thank you." Jesus also cared for crooked religious leaders so that they may have eternal life and the kingdom of God as their inheritance. The woman heard that one must hold on to one word of God in his heart as of first importance. Otherwise, a person will be occupied by many wicked demons. This woman really liked what Jesus had done and said, "Blessed is the mother who gave you birth and nursed you" (27b). She was a mother herself. She wanted to have a son like Jesus. What did Jesus say? "He

replied, 'Blessed rather are those who hear the word of God and obey it'" (28). Jesus again emphasized that the word of God is the word of life. Those who hear and obey the word of God may have eternal life and the kingdom of God as their inheritance.

In this passage Luke emphasizes the compassion of Jesus even when he was on the way to Jerusalem. When we think about our sheep, we never like our dummy sheep or sophisticated sheep or sheep who decided not to trust and obey. But here we learn that we must plant the word of God in them, too. May God bless us to do so.