

6/14/26

Sermon Title: Judgment on Those Who Blaspheme the Holy Spirit

Preacher: Pastor Kim Soonbae

Scripture Passage: Matthew 12:22-37

Jesus and Beelzebul

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.

²³ All the people were astonished and said, "Could this be the Son of David?"

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

²⁵ 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.

²⁶ If Satan drives out Satan, he is divided against himself. How then can his kingdom stand?

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

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

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 plunder his house.

³⁰ "Whoever is not with me is against me, and whoever does not gather with me scatters.

³¹ And so I tell you, every kind of sin and slander can be forgiven, but blasphemy against the Spirit will not be forgiven.

³² Anyone who speaks a word against the Son of Man will be forgiven, but anyone who speaks against the Holy Spirit will not be forgiven, either in this age or in the age to come.

³³ “Make a tree good and its fruit will be good, or make a tree bad and its fruit will be bad, for a tree is recognized by its fruit.

³⁴ You brood of vipers, how can you who are evil say anything good? For the mouth speaks what the heart is full of.

³⁵ A good man brings good things out of the good stored up in him, and an evil man brings evil things out of the evil stored up in him.

³⁶ But I tell you that everyone will have to give account on the day of judgment for every empty word they have spoken.

³⁷ For by your words you will be acquitted, and by your words you will be condemned.”

Jesus healed a man who was blind and unable to speak.

Matthew explains that the reason for the man's blindness and inability to speak was that he was demon-possessed.

However, the reactions of the crowds and the Pharisees to this miracle were strikingly different.

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The crowds were amazed when they saw Jesus heal the man who was blind and unable to speak.

Having never witnessed such miracles performed by their religious leaders, they were astonished by Jesus' supernatural power.

As a result, they began to wonder whether He might be the Messiah.

Yet they were not fully convinced that Jesus was the Messiah.

He was so different from the image of the Messiah they had long envisioned.

In their minds, the Messiah, as the Son of David, would be a king who would restore the kingdom of David politically, economically, and militarily.

The Pharisees, however, responded with hostility.

Fearing that the crowds might begin to regard Jesus as the Messiah, they claimed that His miraculous works were performed by the power of Beelzebul, the prince of demons.

Beelzebul was associated with Baal, the deity worshiped by the Canaanites.

Knowing exactly what was in their hearts, Jesus responded to the Pharisees' accusation with a clear and logical rebuttal.

He exposed the inconsistency of their reasoning and demonstrated the absurdity of their claim.

²⁵ 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.

²⁶ If Satan drives out Satan, he is divided against himself. How then can his kingdom stand?

The Pharisees claimed that Jesus was casting out demons by the power of Beelzebul, the prince of demons.

Jesus explained how contradictory and illogical their accusation was.

If Beelzebul were driving out his own demons, he would in effect be working against himself and destroying his own kingdom.

Such a thing would make no sense, for no kingdom divided against itself can stand.

Jesus then raised another issue to refute their argument.

He asked, "If I drive out demons by Beelzebul, by whom do your own people drive them out?"

In other words, if the Pharisees claimed that Jesus cast out demons by the power of Beelzebul, then would they also say that their own sons and disciples who performed exorcisms were doing so by the power of Beelzebul?

By asking this question, Jesus exposed the inconsistency and hypocrisy of their accusation.

Their judgment was not based on truth or logic, but on their hostility toward Him.

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

The phrase “your sons” refers to the disciples and followers of the Pharisees—those who had been taught under their authority.

They, too, practiced exorcism and claimed to cast out demons.

Jesus pointed out the inconsistency in the Pharisees’ accusation by asking, in effect, “If you say that I cast out demons by the power of Beelzebul, then must you not also say that your own disciples cast out demons by the power of Beelzebul?”

Jesus went on to tell the Pharisees that if their own followers were casting out demons by the power of God, then those very followers would stand as witnesses against them and expose them as hypocrites and sinners for accusing Him of working by the power of Beelzebul.

As a result of Jesus’ argument, the Pharisees found themselves trapped in a dilemma.

If their disciples cast out demons by God's power, then it was unjust to claim that Jesus alone was casting them out by the power of Beelzebul.

Yet they could neither say that their own disciples were empowered by Beelzebul nor admit that Jesus was acting through the power of God.

Having logically exposed the contradiction and inconsistency of their accusation, Jesus went on to declare that His power to cast out demons came not from Satan, but from the Spirit of God.

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

Jesus' casting out of demons and healing of the sick by the power of the Holy Spirit demonstrated not only that Satan's kingdom was being overthrown, but also that the Kingdom of God and the power of the Holy Spirit were actively at work in the present.

These works were evidence that the Kingdom of God had already come.

The Kingdom of God entered this world in a real and eschatological sense through the incarnation of Jesus Christ.

It has already been inaugurated, and one day it will be brought to its fullness in the new heaven and the new earth.

Jesus declared that the end of the age had begun to break into the present world through His ministry.

He went on to say that He had already bound the strong man—Satan himself.

By binding Satan, Jesus demonstrated His supreme authority over the powers of darkness and His ability to plunder the strong man's house, setting free those who had been held captive under Satan's dominion.

Through His ministry, the decisive victory of God's Kingdom over the kingdom of darkness was already being revealed.

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 plunder his house.

The “strong man” refers to Satan, and his “possessions” refer to those who have been held captive by him—those under demonic oppression and the dominion of evil.

Jesus teaches that His casting out of demons is evidence that Satan has already been bound.

The Kingdom of God is already present and actively exercising authority over the powers of evil.

Although Satan will continue to exert influence in this world until Christ's return, he is already a defeated and bound enemy under the authority of Jesus Christ. Having bound Satan, Jesus is now rescuing, one by one, those whom Satan once claimed as his own.

He is reclaiming them for their rightful Owner, God Himself, and transforming them into people who live under the guidance and power of the Holy Spirit.

This is the age of the Messiah, the time in which Jesus is gathering back those who had become the possessions of Satan.

The strong man's house is being plundered by Christ.

One by one, captives are being set free from the dominion of darkness.

And when Christ returns, Satan, who has already been bound, will be judged and destroyed forever.

Jesus also makes it clear that there can be no neutral position in the conflict between the Kingdom of God and the kingdom of Satan.

No one can remain on the sidelines.

The coming of God's Kingdom demands a response.

Every person must choose where they stand—in the Kingdom of Christ or in opposition to it.

Those who do not actively stand with Christ and participate in His work are, in effect, opposing the Kingdom of God.

³⁰ “Whoever is not with me is against me, and whoever does not gather with me scatters.

The phrase “whoever is not with Me” refers to those who refuse to follow Jesus, while “whoever does not gather with Me” refers to those who seek to scatter people away from Him and hinder the advance and expansion of the Kingdom of God.

Jesus goes on to say that every sin and slander committed by human beings can be forgiven, but blasphemy against the Holy Spirit will not be forgiven.

If this is the case, then it would appear that the Pharisees, who attributed Jesus' miracles to the power of Beelzebul, had committed a most serious sin.

By willfully rejecting the clear work of God's Spirit and attributing it to Satan, they were placing themselves in grave spiritual danger.

Their problem was not a lack of evidence but a hardened and stubborn refusal to acknowledge the truth that stood before them.

Even though they witnessed the unmistakable work of the Holy Spirit through Jesus, they deliberately called the work of God the work of Satan.

In doing so, they were not merely speaking against Jesus; they were resisting and blaspheming the Holy Spirit who was testifying through Him.

³¹ And so I tell you, every kind of sin and slander can be forgiven, but blasphemy against the Spirit will not be forgiven.

³² Anyone who speaks a word against the Son of Man will be forgiven, but anyone who speaks against the Holy Spirit will not be forgiven, either in this age or in the age to come.

“Speaking against the Son of Man” refers to rejecting or opposing the truth of the gospel proclaimed by Jesus Christ.

“Speaking against the Holy Spirit” refers to denying that Jesus casts out demons by the power of the Holy Spirit—in other words, knowingly and stubbornly rejecting a work that one recognizes to be the work of God.

The Holy Spirit has been entrusted with the work of bringing God's creation and redemption to completion.

He convicts sinners of their sin, enables them to respond to Christ's invitation, and leads them into the knowledge of eternal truth, helping them grow into mature followers of God.

Therefore, even those who disregard the Father or oppose the Son may still come to repentance through the regenerating work of the Holy Spirit.

It is the Spirit who brings people to conviction, repentance, and new birth.

But those who resist and reject the Spirit's work—those who deliberately shut themselves off from the very One who leads them to repentance and salvation—place themselves in a tragic position that can only result in judgment.

The sin against the Holy Spirit is therefore an eschatological sin, a sin with eternal consequences.

It represents humanity's ultimate and final rejection of God's saving grace, because it rejects the very means by which God brings sinners to repentance and faith.

Jesus then rebukes the Pharisees by using the illustration of a tree and its fruit.

Although the fruit of His ministry—the casting out of demons, the healing of the sick, and the restoration of broken lives—clearly demonstrated a good and righteous source, the Pharisees maliciously slandered that source.

Jesus points out that there is an inseparable relationship between a tree and its fruit: a good tree bears good fruit, and a bad tree bears bad fruit.

Since His works were undeniably good, their attempt to label their source as evil revealed the corruption of their own hearts rather than any defect in Him.

³³ “Make a tree good and its fruit will be good, or make a tree bad and its fruit will be bad, for a tree is recognized by its fruit.

³⁴ You brood of vipers, how can you who are evil say anything good? For the mouth speaks what the heart is full of.

³⁵ A good man brings good things out of the good stored up in him, and an evil man brings evil things out of the evil stored up in him.

Jesus strongly emphasizes that a person's inner nature and outward actions must ultimately correspond to one another.

What is in a person's heart will naturally reveal itself through that person's words and actions.

The heart is the storehouse of one's thoughts, desires, intentions, moral character, and will.

Addressing the Pharisees, Jesus calls them “a brood of vipers” and exposes their true spiritual condition.

They had not only accused Jesus of being empowered by demons, but had also made similar accusations against John the Baptist.

Despite John's call to repentance, they failed to bear the fruit of genuine repentance.

As a result, their own wickedness and fruitlessness would bring them under judgment.

Like trees that bear no good fruit, they faced the prospect of being cut down and thrown into the fire by Jesus Christ Himself.

Jesus goes on to teach that on the Day of Judgment, He, the Judge of all humanity, will evaluate every person by the words they have spoken.

Words are not insignificant; they reveal the true condition of the heart.

Therefore, a person's speech will serve as evidence either of righteousness or of guilt.

As Jesus declares, people will give an account for every careless word they have spoken, and by their words they will be justified, and by their words they will be condemned.

³⁶ But I tell you that everyone will have to give account on the day of judgment for every empty word they have spoken.

³⁷ For by your words you will be acquitted, and by your words you will be condemned.”

Jesus teaches that one of the standards of judgment will be whether a person has spoken good words or evil words.

This is because a person's words reveal what is truly in the heart.

Only a person with a good heart can consistently speak what is good and produce genuinely good deeds.

In the same way, evil words flow from an evil heart.

Therefore, a person's speech serves as a reflection of his or her inner character.

What we say is not merely a matter of outward expression; it reveals the true condition of our hearts.

For this reason, Jesus teaches that our words have eternal significance and will be taken into account on the Day of Judgment.

A good heart produces good words and good fruit, while a corrupt heart produces evil words and evil fruit.

Beloved members of Church of Godly Dreams,

Through today's passage, we see how the human heart is revealed in response to the ministry of Jesus Christ.

Although the crowds witnessed the same event and were amazed, remaining open to the possibility that Jesus might be the Messiah, the Pharisees continually distorted His works and denied the work of the Holy Spirit.

Even though the Kingdom of God had come right before their eyes, they refused to acknowledge it.

Jesus warns these Pharisees that every sin and blasphemy against people can be forgiven, but blasphemy against the Holy Spirit will not be forgiven.

This is because the Holy Spirit's work is to bring God's creation and redemption to completion.

To reject and deny His work is to reject the very means by which God brings salvation.

Therefore, deliberately resisting and distorting the work of the Holy Spirit is the most serious sin a person can commit.

Jesus also teaches that our words will serve as a standard of judgment on the last day.

Just as a tree is recognized by its fruit, a person's heart is revealed by his words and actions.

Our words are not merely expressions; they are spiritual evidence that reveals the condition of our hearts.

A good heart produces good words, while an evil heart produces evil words.

Therefore, let us examine our speech, renew our minds, and surrender our hearts to the guidance of the Holy Spirit.

Let us not resist the Holy Spirit but live in obedience to His leading.

On the last day, it is the Holy Spirit who will bring God's work of salvation in us to its glorious completion.

May we be people whose words, hearts, and lives reflect the glory of God, and may we faithfully walk in the grace and truth of our Lord Jesus Christ.

In His holy name we pray. Amen.