**The Finger of God**

Luke 11:14-28

Key Verse 20

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

**Introduction**

 In today’s passage Jesus set a man free from a mute demon. But some doubters slandered Jesus. They accused Jesus of driving out demons by the power of demons. However, Jesus answered them patiently, appealing to their reason using “if” 3 times. In this way Jesus helped them to get out of the devil's power and enter the kingdom of God. May the Lord help us to stand on the side of God and enter the kingdom of God.

1. Read verse 14. What did Jesus do for a man? (14a) How do you think is it important for the man to speak? (14b)

1-1, Read verse 14.

 Jesus was driving out a demon that was mute. When the demon left, the man who had been mute spoke, and the crowd was amazed.

1-2, What did Jesus do for a man? (14a)

 *Jesus was driving out a demon that was mute. When the demon left, the man who had been mute spoke,*

1-3, How do you think is it important for the man to speak and what does this change tell about Jesus? (14b, Isaiah 35:6)

* From Wikipedia, **Muteness** or **mutism** (from [Latin](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Latin_language) *mutus*, meaning "silent") is an inability to speak often caused by a [speech disorder](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Speech_disorder), hearing loss, or surgery.
* Someone who is mute may be so due to the unwillingness to speak in certain social situations due to past trauma/stress.
* Those who are physically mute may have problems with the parts of the [human body](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Human_anatomy)(the [esophagus](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Esophagus), [vocal cords](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Vocal_cords), [lungs](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Lungs), [mouth](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Mouth), or [tongue](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Tongue), etc.).
* Being mute is often associated with those who have hearing impairments or are deaf like a case in Mark 7:31-37, but other variations of muteness can be linked to those who can hear and have the ability to speak.
* Other causes include [intellectual disability](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Mental_retardation) and [autism](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Autism).
* A person can be born mute, or become mute later in life due to injury or disease.
* The prevalence of mutism from all causes is on the order of 8 persons per 10000.
* Trauma or injury to the [Broca's area](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Broca%27s_area) of the brain can cause muteness like a case of Zechariah who was a healthy individual with temporary disability to speak.

* Most demons Jesus encountered were talkative and offensive. Jesus rebuked them to be quiet, and they were.
* But this demon was mute. When it entered the man, it made him mute as well.
* Its dark power oppressed his spirit and crushed his humanity.
* If the man could have spoken, he might have cried out in misery. But he was mute.
* It is easy to ignore such people. However, Jesus heard the cry of his soul.
* Jesus took the time, and spent the energy to drive out the demon.
* The dark power that had long oppressed the man vanished. Heavenly sunshine flooded his inner man. He must have felt light and free and joyful.
* Those watching were amazed. They had seen a miracle.
* According to Isaiah, it was a sign that Jesus was the Messiah.

Isaiah 35:5-6 read,

 Then will the eyes of the blind be opened and the ears of the deaf unstopped. **6** Then will the lame leap like a deer, and the mute tongue shout for joy. Water will gush forth in the wilderness and streams in the desert.

2. Read verses 15-20. Why did some doubters say? (15, 16) Who were they? (Mt 12:24; Mk 3:22) What did Jesus say to them? (17-20) What does it mean by the finger of God? What is the result of driving out demons with the finger of God? (20b)

2-1, Read verses 15-20.

 **15** But some of them said, “By Beelzebul, the prince of demons, he is driving out demons.” **16** Others tested him by asking for a sign from heaven. **17** Jesus knew their thoughts and said to them: “Any kingdom divided against itself will be ruined, and a house divided against itself will fall. **18** If Satan is divided against himself, how can his kingdom stand? I say this because you claim that I drive out demons by Beelzebul. **19** Now if I drive out demons by Beelzebul, by whom do your followers drive them out? So then, they will be your judges. **20** But if I drive out demons by the finger of God, then the kingdom of God has come upon you.

2-2, Why did some doubters say? (15, 16)

 *“By Beelzebul, the prince of demons, he is driving out demons.”* ***16*** *Others tested him by asking for a sign from heaven.*

2-3, Who were they? (Mt 12:24; Mk 3:22)

* According to two references in Matthew 12 and Mark 3, they were most likely the Pharisees, the teachers of the law, and even Jesus’ own family members.
* We also see this slander from many doubters whenever there is a work of God.
* Often times we experienced that our family family, our worldly friends, and even leaders in the (St.) churches we used to attend came up with a malicious slander knowingly or unknowingly.
* We are also familiar with many slanderous remarks in the websites, hindering the work of God.

Matthew 12:22-24 read,

 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.”

Mark 3:20-22 read,

Then Jesus entered a house, and again a crowd gathered, so that he and his disciples were not even able to eat. **21** When his family heard about this, they went to take charge of him, for they said, “He is out of his mind.” **22** And the teachers of the law who came down from Jerusalem said, “He is possessed by Beelzebul! By the prince of demons he is driving out demons.”

2-4, What did Jesus say to them? (17-20)

*Jesus knew their thoughts and said to them: “Any kingdom divided against itself will be ruined, and a house divided against itself will fall.* ***18*** *If Satan is divided against himself, how can his kingdom stand? I say this because you claim that I drive out demons by Beelzebul.* ***19*** *Now if I drive out demons by Beelzebul, by whom do your followers drive them out? So then, they will be your judges.* ***20*** *But if I drive out demons by the finger of God, then the kingdom of God has come upon you.*

2-5, What does it mean by the finger of God?

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

* We do not know which finger it indicates: Thumb, Index finger, Middle finger, Ring finger, or Little finger. But it doesn’t matter for it is symbolic expression.
* “The finger of God” is a poetic reference to God’s almighty power.
* The first time the phrase “the finger of God” appears in the Scriptures in Exodus 8:19.
* It was actually used by Egyptian magicians to indicate that they could not defeat the power of God by their magic arts.
* Pharaoh, the Egyptian king, had been confident in the military and magic power of Egypt.
* So he ignored God’s word through Moses to let the Israelites go. But God cannot be mocked.
* God decided to reveal his glory through Pharaoh.
* God began to work miracles that would reveal his power.
* The first miracles were turning a staff into a snake, and turning water to blood. Egyptian magicians were able to copy these.
* But when God turned dust into gnats, the Egyptian magicians could not.
* So they told Pharaoh “This is the finger of God.”
* They acknowledged that they had reached their limitation.
* But Pharaoh would not bow down before God.
* So this “finger of God” continued to touch Egypt through more plagues.
* These plagues humiliated the gods of Egypt, ending in the plague of death on the firstborn.
* Finally, Pharaoh acknowledged the God of Israel and let the Israelites go.
* In this way, God revealed that he is the one true God.
* Here we learn that “the finger of God” was more powerful than the superpower nation of Egypt.
* The Jewish religious leaders should have realized that Jesus was driving out demons by “the finger of God,” and that they were no match for him.
* God does not need his entire arm, or even a hand, but just one finger to win complete victory over his enemies.
* Jesus revealed that this power source at work in his ministry. The kingdom of Satan was being destroyed by “the finger of God.”
* God’s victory would be complete and there was no power that could stand against him.

2-6, What is the result of driving out demons with the finger of God? (20b)

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

* Jesus said, “the kingdom of God has come to you.”
* Jesus’ word and God’s kingdom would endure forever.
* Nothing is more powerful than the finger of God.
* The finger of God is more powerful than all the power of devils combined.
* Even though the devil works very hard with all his power, God Almighty defeats him completely with a finger. This is good news to mankind.
* Demons deceive and oppress, but Jesus sets captives free.
* Demons destroy, but Jesus gives life. Jesus liberates us from all the power of the devil and enables us to serve God without fear, all our days (Lk 1:74,75)
* If the Jewish religious leaders simply accepted this good news, they could have eternal life and peace.
* This is what Jesus wanted for them; it is what he wants for us, too.

3. Read verses 21-23. Who are the strong man and the stronger man? (21, 22) How does Jesus attack and overpower the demon? What would happen to those who are with Jesus? (23)

3-1, Read verses 21-23.

 **21** “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 his plunder.

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

3-2, Who are the strong man and the stronger man? (21, 22)

* “The strong man” is the devil while “the stronger man” is Jesus.

3-3, How does Jesus attack and overpower the demon?

 *When someone stronger attacks and overpowers him, he takes away the armor in which the man trusted and divides up his plunder.*

* The devil’s temptation is so strong and seductive that no one can resist.
* This strong devil had invaded the former mute man and ruled over him.
* But someone stronger who’s Jesus Christ came along.
* Jesus attacked and overpowered the devil and took away the man from the devil’s control.
* Jesus set the man free to use his faculties to glorify God. When the man began to speak, this testified that Jesus is the Messiah sent by God.
* Jesus is the stronger man. Jesus is the true God. The devil cannot stop Jesus from setting prisoners free.
* The kingdom of God is not a matter of talk, but of power.

1 Corinthians 4:20 read,

*For the kingdom of God is not a matter of talk but of power.*

3-4, What would happen to those who are with Jesus? (23)

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

* There are only two sides: Jesus’ side and the devil’s side. All people are on one side or the other.
* The only way to stand on Jesus’ side is to make a decision to accept him as the Lord on the basis of what he has done.
* It was time for the religious leaders to make such a decision.
* At this point, some people don’t want to make any decision. But no decision turns out to be against Jesus in the end.

Mark 3:28-29 read,

Truly I tell you, people can be forgiven all their sins and every slander they utter, **29** but whoever blasphemes against the Holy Spirit will never be forgiven; they are guilty of an eternal sin.”

* On the other hand, those who are with Jesus work willingly for the kingdom of God.
* They know the spiritual joy of living for Jesus, and they hate the devil, who destroys people.
* Here we learn that each one of us must make a decision to accept Jesus as Lord and to stand on his side.
* Then we can dwell in his kingdom.

4. Read verses 24-28. What danger did a person face after an evil spirit had departed from them? (24-26) How do you think he/she can prevent it? What did Jesus teach the admiring woman about what really counts? (27-28)

4-1, Read verses 24-28.

“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.’ **25** When it arrives, it finds the house swept clean and put in order. **26** 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.” **27** As Jesus was saying these things, a woman in the crowd called out, “Blessed is the mother who gave you birth and nursed you.” **28** He replied, “Blessed rather are those who hear the word of God and obey it.”

4-2, What danger did a person face after an evil spirit had departed from them? (24-26)

  *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.’* ***25*** *When it arrives, it finds the house swept clean and put in order.* ***26*** *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.”*

4-3, How do you think he/she can prevent it?

4-4, What did Jesus teach the admiring woman about what really counts? (27-28)

 *As Jesus was saying these things, a woman in the crowd called out, “Blessed is the mother who gave you birth and nursed you.”* ***28*** *He replied, “Blessed rather are those who hear the word of God and obey it.”*

* The best blessing is to enter the kingdom of God and dwell there permanently.
* God’s kingdom members have complete and final victory over the devil.
* In order to enter the kingdom of God, we need to hear the word of God and obey it.
* The word of God has a connection to the finger of God. God inscribed his word- -the Ten Commandments--on stone tablets with his finger (Ex 31:18; Deut 9:10).

Exodus 31:18 reads,

 When the Lord finished speaking to Moses on Mount Sinai, he gave him the two tablets of the covenant law, the tablets of stone inscribed by the finger of God.

Deuteronomy 9:10 reads,

The Lord gave me two stone tablets inscribed by the finger of God. On them were all the commandments the Lord proclaimed to you on the mountain out of the fire, on the day of the assembly.

* So “the finger of God” may be synonymous with the word of God.
* One word of God, like one finger, may seem small. But it can drive out demons, overturn kingdoms.
* In the Old Testament, God inscribed his word with his finger on tablets of stone. But Jesus has given us a new covenant through his blood.
* Now the Spirit of God can write the word of God in our minds and on our hearts.

Jeremiah 31:33 reads,

“This is the covenant I will make with the people of Israel after that time,” declares the Lord. “I will put my law in their minds and write it on their hearts. I will be their God, and they will be my people.

2 Corinthians 3:3 reads,

You show that you are a letter from Christ, the result of our ministry, written not with ink but with the Spirit of the living God, not on tablets of stone but on tablets of human hearts.

* This word is living and active and speaks to us every day.
* As we hear and obey God's word, we can experience the kingdom of God and
* The finger of God can guard our hearts and our minds completely and keep us in perfect peace.
* The finger of God can give us eternal life and draw us to his everlasting kingdom.
* This is why we often pray to receive “one word of God” in UBF ministry.
* We would like to pick up one word through having daily bread each morning.
* Also we would like to receive one word of God through Sunday passage.
* In these way we may efficiently keep our hearts from getting bad to worse.

**Conclusion**

 We’ve learned that in this hostile times, we better decide to stand on Jesus’ side because of the almighty finger of God. May the Lord write his word daily on our hearts so that we may dwell in the kingdom of God for good. Amen.

**One word: By the finger of God!**