

"Heavenly Housing" Luke 11:14-28 Oculi 2024

Dear brothers and sisters in Christ,

A metaphor is “a figure of speech in which a word or phrase is applied to an object or action to which it is not literally applicable.” Metaphors are images and symbolic language to describe something abstract or hard to explain or even something embarrassing. We call metaphors figures of speech and most of the time we want a particular image to come into mind when we use them. Some examples:

- We call a marriage ceremony “tying the knot” because two lives come together as one.
- We call lazy person a “couch potato” because if any vegetable would be lazy, it would be a potato.
- We might say being busy at work means we are “drowning” because it is overwhelming.
- If we are super hungry, we say, “I could eat a horse.”

This is even true when it comes to spiritual things or Biblical thoughts. The Bible often uses metaphors and symbolic language to describe spiritual realities. We often do the same because sometimes spiritual Truth is hard to describe, and we want a mental picture to accompany our words. Some examples:

- Psalm 23 famously states that “The Lord is my shepherd” showing His care for us.
- We might call the Christian life a “walk” meaning it is one step at a time and a journey.
- Jesus calls Himself the “Bread of Life” trying to explain that we need Him.
- When going through a hard time spiritually, we might say we are going through “a valley.”

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- Wisdom from God in the Bible is described as the “fountain of life.”
- The Apostle Paul calls the Church the “Body of Christ” meaning it is interconnected.

You get the idea.

Today we are going to be in Luke 11 where Jesus employs a metaphor to explain spiritual truth and reality that we absolutely need to take to heart. The impactful part about this metaphor is that Jesus uses it as does the rest of the Bible. We find it all throughout the New Testament in the Gospels and in Paul’s writings and in the Book of Hebrews.

Repeatedly in the New Testament, the Christian faith is described in terms of housing. From the foundations to the walls to even the cornerstone... lots of times we see this metaphor used to describe the spiritual reality of having a relationship with God through Jesus Christ in the power of the Holy Spirit.

Let’s remind ourselves of what happens in Luke 11. Jesus is casting out demons and the folks standing there say that Jesus has such mastery over the profane and evil because He Himself is profane and evil. Jesus says that is ridiculous since “Every kingdom divided against itself is laid waste, and a divided household falls.” Jesus states that He is stronger and more powerful than Satan which is how he manhandles any evil spirit that crosses His path. He also then states very clearly in verse 23: “Whoever is not with Me is against Me, and whoever does not gather with Me scatters.”

What do we find in this passage? We find first come plausible, but faulty logic. The folks are watching Jesus do amazing miracles and they

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have never seen anything like Him before. That was because there had never been Anyone like Him before. They assume that low level demons are subject to more superior demons and so must obey and make room for the big baddies. The people assumed that perhaps Jesus has the chief of the devils in Him which is how He can order around all the evil spirits. While somewhat plausible, it is reality makes no sense. Jesus answers this faulty logic with correct thinking in that Satan would not fight against himself and pave the way for holiness and healing and God-given wholeness. Jesus answers this faulty logic with the Truth that He is stronger than the devils and tears down all that they have built.

We also find a low-key explanation that God is infinitely more powerful than any evil spirit when it comes to spiritual warfare or spiritual struggles. We often think good versus evil is a one side against the other side even battle. It might be that way in movies, but in reality, evil and chaos cannot hope to compete with holiness and goodness. Note that in verse 20 Jesus says that He drives out demons by the “finger” of God. Just a flick of one finger with no real effort. All the forces of evil can be flicked away with the finger of God. I like that and it gives me great comfort and warm fuzzies.

We lastly and most importantly find in this passage that Jesus uses this “building metaphor” to not only defend Himself against faulty beliefs, but also makes the Truth a little more personal. What I mean by a little more personal, is that verse 23 moves the Truth that He is talking about from just the immediate context of the people around Him in this passage and moves it to an eternal principle that applies to us as well.

Jesus makes it very clear that a divided house cannot stand, and this applies to people and their spiritual lives. We are either with Jesus or we are against Jesus. We either accept Jesus as Savior and Lord or we

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do not. There is no middle ground. Jesus is very very very clear in Luke 11:23... if you are not for Jesus then you are against Him.

This is very impactful for us to know! It matters what we believe about Jesus and how we talk about Him. If you believe that Jesus was a fictional invention of first century Jewish fishermen or a contrived religious crutch for weak minded people or a flimflam man who pulled off the greatest long-con in history... then you are against Him. If you believe that Jesus was just a good person or just a good moral teacher or was just the best example of humanity... then you are against Him.

This is very impactful for us to know! It matters what we believe about Jesus and how we talk about Him. If you believe that Jesus is the Son of God then you are for Him. If you give your believing-loyalty that Jesus is the Christ the Son of the Living God and that He died for your sins once for all on the cross and rose on the third day and ascended into Heaven and will return again on Judgement Day... then you are for Him. If you obey Jesus by being baptized into His Name and seek to live out His teachings for the rest of your life, then you are for Him.

There. Is. No. Middle. Ground. There was no middle ground or gray area for the people standing there seeing Jesus in the flesh and there are no wishy-washy possibilities for us now. Jesus shuts all that down and gives no wiggle room. You either believe in Jesus and obey Him or you don't. You either choose Jesus for your whole life or you don't. You either give Jesus your heart loyalty or you don't. You either rely on the grace of Jesus and His blood or you don't.

Jesus teaches us (in concert with other passages in the neighborhood) that our spiritual house needs to have our foundation in Him. Just Him. Only Him. He is the cornerstone. He is it. We then need to build our life on the teachings of the Old Testament and the New Testament which allows us to have a life that God inhabits. Jesus lays

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out a clear warning that a house divided is dangerous. Jesus describes that our lives will crash down if He is not what holds it together. Jesus teaches that you want Him as the defender of your soul.

How does this apply to us? I will apply this for us by asking a series of questions that only you can answer about you. I am going to try and ask them a little bit differently in keeping with our metaphor to make sure we reflect well. We must take inventory of ourselves to make sure that we are not a divided spiritual house.

Do you have a foundation in Christ? Have you been immersed into Jesus and accepted Him as your Lord and Savior? Entering the household of God is step #1 in basing your life on Him. You know if you have accepted Jesus as your Lord and Savior and been baptized in Him for the forgiveness of sins and the gift of the Holy Spirit. If you have not surrendered to Jesus, you are divided.

Do you have rebar, reinforcing bars, in your foundation and in the walls and concrete of your life? Rebar for this question is going to be the Bible. Rebar for this question is the teachings of Jesus. Only you know if you spend time in God's Word reading and applying it and obeying what you find written there. If you are not consistently purposefully in the Bible, you are divided because something else will always take its place.

Do you have vital insulation with Christ in your life? Believers in Jesus can only have a spiritual life in Christ as we abide in Christ and cultivate our relationship with the Holy Spirit. This happens by prayer and worship and listening and fasting. If we are not consistently in prayer and tuning ourselves to God or insulating our lives with Him, we are filling ourselves with other influence and the house may fall with a great crash.

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Are you adding a second story to your spiritual house and renovating the first floor? Becoming a believer in Jesus is not a one-and-done proposal, but rather a believer in Jesus accepts a lifetime of spiritual growth, emotional change, thought sanctification, and constantly growing up in every way into Him. Believers are to grow in Christ. It is not a passive relationship. If we are not seeking to be more like Christ on a regular basis, we are a broken-down RV on a 40 acre lot.

Do you often have a yard sale and get rid of the junk that fills up your spiritual house? We live in a world that offers us so much false junk and sometimes we just take it all in and soon our spiritual house is filled with false beliefs and half-truths. We may fill up our lives with our own opinions and politics and entertainment and other priorities that there is no room for Jesus in the inn or in our hearts. If we are not constantly purging the false lies of this world in our hearts, we are damaging our foundation.

Lastly, do you have an immovable permanent union with Christ? What I mean is... are you a mobile home Christian or are you a site-built house Christian? The foundations of those two structures is very different and endures storms and hardship differently. One theoretically can pick up and move and the other stays put no matter what. If you give yourself options to say no to Christ and the ability to back out of your commitment to Him, you are a divided spiritual house.

May Jesus be your permanent foundation. May Jesus reinforce every part of your mind, spirit, and emotions. May Jesus insulate you from this world. May you continue to build and renovate constantly being sanctified in Christ. May you get rid of the junk that fills up your spiritual house. May you believe fully in Jesus Christ and trust completely in Him. May you become all one thing. Amen.