



- Illustration – Burning up the engine because the car was in neutral.
- **Big Idea: Authentic Christian living leaves no place for neutrality.**
- Read Luke 11:14-28
- Pray

- v. 15 – The religious leaders, who loved themselves more than truth, start grasping at straws to discredit Christ.
 - Little has changed today. Consider secular searches for the so-called “historical Jesus.”
 - These leaders wanted their version of the Messiah with their own stamp of approval. The same remains true in the world today.
 - When we want Jesus “our way,” sloppy excuses tend to follow.
- v. 16 – Jesus responds to “sign-seekers” in the next passage (v. 29-32).
- v. 17-20
 - God hates division and is opposed to divisive people.
 - Proverbs 6:16-19 – *“There are six things the LORD hates, seven that are detestable to him: haughty eyes, a lying tongue, hands that shed innocent blood, a heart that devises wicked schemes, feet that are quick to rush into evil, a false witness who pours out lies and a man who stirs up dissension among brothers.”*
 - Titus 3:10-11 – *“Warn a divisive person once, and then warn him a second time. After that, have nothing to do with him. You may be sure that such a man is warped and sinful; he is self-condemned.”*
 - God is not divided against Himself. Thus, anyone sowing division in the body of Christ is doing Satan’s wicked work for him.
 - Jesus exposes the folly of the religious leader’s objections.
 - Civil war weakens a nation and division demolishes a family.
 - Satan’s kingdom has been around far too long to think he uses such unproductive methods as the objectors suggested.

- v. 19 – The religious leaders wanted to credit their exorcisms to God, but those of Christ to Satan. They were trying to employ an impossible double standard.
- v. 20 – The Conclusion: *“The Kingdom of God has come to you.”*
 - In the OT, there is no mention of demons being driven out, yet there is an explosion of such activity with the coming of Christ.
 - This anomaly emphasizes the fact that the power of Christ is the only power strong enough to vanquish the grip of darkness.
- v. 21 – The “strong man” is a picture of Satan.
 - If Christ is not in you, then your life is held captive by the “strong man,” who is Satan.
 - 1 John 5:19 – *“The whole world is under the control of the evil one.”*
 - Ephesians 2:2 (NLT) – *“You used to live just like the rest of the world, full of sin, obeying Satan, the mighty prince of the power of the air. He is the spirit at work in the hearts of those who refuse to obey God.”*
 - Example – Driving the demon from Joe.
 - [Explain why I don’t share this experience very often.]
 1. I don’t want it to be a distraction.
 2. It is like disease: If God ordains, I will fight through it by His strength and for His glory, but, personally, I would prefer to avoid both altogether.
 3. I am not sure if the story has a happy ending, because I am not sure what has happened to Joe.
 - [Describe Joe’s condition – Fresh razor blade cuts all up and down his arms, utterly confused, and distant]
 - [Describe what happened when I began praying for him.]
 - [Highlight my complete weakness, but God’s strength through Christ]
 - It was the most scared I have ever been, but at the same time it was the most confident in Christ that I have ever been.
 - You never really know how strong Christ is until He is all the strength that you have.
 - Though your outward appearance and visible actions may not be as obviously miserable as Joe’s were, and though you are probably not possessed by a demon, please hear this today: If who are not redeemed in Christ, you are imprisoned in the same miserable dungeon.
- *“...possessions are safe”* – Satan’s imprisonment of human hearts is complete, except for one unfailing remedy, which we see in verse 22.
- v. 22 – Only Christ can overcome Satan’s grip over sinners.
 - The only way to defeat the “strong man” of Satan is to call upon the stronger man, who is Jesus Christ and Him alone.

- v. 23 – Everyone is either for Christ or against Him.
- Life is a war, and in this war, there is no neutral ground. There is no spiritual Switzerland.
- All of us all the time are wither battling for the eternal glory of God or the fleeting glory of the enemy.
- 1 Corinthians 10:31 – “*Whether you eat or drink or whatever you do, do it all for the glory of God.*”
- All of us have been made to worship, and we are worshipping someone or something in everything we do.
- The fundamental question of life is not, “*Are you worshipping?*” It is, rather, “*What are you worshipping?*”
- There is no place for neutrality. Beneath whose banner are you marching?

Simply put, because God desires and deserves to be honored is all that we do, think, and say, neutrality in any aspect of life is impossible. With every thought in our minds... with every utterance of our lips... with every action of our lives... we are taking sides and giving glory to something. Whose side are we on? In the course of an average day, to whom are we really giving our worship? ... Is it our Father in Heaven or is it fame on this earth? ... Is it our Creator or is it our convenience? ... God or greed? ... Our Master or our money? ... The Almighty or the alma mater? ... Jehovah or our jobs? ... Do we really battle for the glory of our Savior or are we striving to bring glory to ourselves? Whatever the case, in every aspect of life there are two and only two possibilities: We either exalt God or we exalt worthless idols.

This truth is woven throughout the entire tapestry of biblical revelation. That is, Scripture is a litany of utterly black and white depictions of God’s kingdom. In the Garden of Eden, for example, there were only two categories trees—one was allowed, one was forbidden. After they sinned, Adam and Eve learned that there were only two places to live—in the Garden or out of it. In the Old Testament, there were only two types of people—God’s people, Israel, and everyone else, the Gentiles. Still today, God’s kingdom remains a “black and white, either or” proposition. In this life, there is good and there is bad... right and wrong... holiness and sin... wisdom and foolishness... light and dark... true and false... life and death.

As we sit together today, please know and understand that there are *only* two categories of people here in this sanctuary. You and I are either saved or we are lost. Every single one of us here is either a sinner separated from God or a saint saved by faith. In God’s eternal terms, there is no other option; there is no third

category. There are and will forever remain only two possible outcomes to this life—in Heaven with God or in hell without Him. There is only eternal glory or eternal destruction, for we are either with the kingdom or we are without it. Jesus is the way, and He is the only way. He is the truth, and His is the only truth. He is the life, and in Him alone is life everlasting. Scripture is absolute. Truth is total. Neutrality is nonsense.

Please understand this today: There are two paths presented in the Bible: God's way and every other way. There is, on the one hand, the narrow road that leads to life, and there is, on the other, the broad road that leads to destruction. Make no mistake: There is no middle road located somewhere between the two. There is no fence between them upon which the waffling among us may sit. God desires, and obviously deserves, to be recognized in everything that all of us are and do, and He is clearly not honored by our alleged neutrality.

-- Revelation 3:15-16 – *“I know your deeds, that you are neither cold nor hot. I wish you were either one or the other! So, because you are lukewarm—neither hot nor cold—I am about to spit you out of my mouth.”*

-- Joshua 24:15 – *“If serving the LORD seems undesirable to you, then choose for yourselves this day whom you will serve... But as for me and my household, we will serve the LORD.”*

-- v. 24-26

-- Only Christ can forever subdue the strong man, Satan.

-- First, we see in these verses that popular psychology and other secular solutions are sorely insufficient.

-- Pop therapy or ostensibly good secular advice may seem to work for a time, but in the end, the one who follows it is worse off than when he first followed it.

-- v. 26 – Those not filled with Christ will be filled with something sinister.

-- The wicked spirits mentioned here imply more than just demon possession.

-- Mark 7:21-22 – *“For from within, out of men's hearts, come evil thoughts, sexual immorality, theft, murder, adultery, greed, malice, deceit, lewdness, envy, slander, arrogance and folly.”*

-- Ephesians 4:31 – *“Get rid of all bitterness, rage and anger, brawling and slander, along with every form of malice.”*

-- Note: This doesn't mean that all unbelievers are terrible people. It does mean that they are still identified by unforgiven sin.

- The problem is not that unbelievers believe in nothing; the problem is that they will believe in anything.

The world around us will say, “Oh how absurd you are to think that God is the author of intelligent life on earth. No, no, no! Here’s what happened: Aliens from outer space fired their DNA through space on high-powered rockets, and when some of that rocket-powered DNA combined with mud and lightning, life of earth began. Again, the lofty secular intellectuals around us will say: “My oh my, how ridiculous it is for you to believe there is a God who created Adam and Eve in the Garden of Eden. Ludicrous, I tell you! No, let me tell you why you are really here... You see, there was once this simple, lifeless, one-celled organism. Well, one day it decided to grow fins, and it became a fish... That fish grew legs that became a lizard, which grew wings and became a bird... which flew into the ocean and became a whale... which crawled out of the ocean and became a bear... which climbed a tree and became a monkey... which stood upright and became you. Oh, how ridiculous it is that you believe in fairy tales about God, when the answer to life is so obvious!”

- The one who does not believe in God through Jesus Christ inevitably succumbs to something false.

Where Christ is not in a human heart, we hear the fallen reasoning of deceived hearts, which make rationalizations such as this: “Well, sure I sometimes tell lies to make myself look better to others... and, sure, my eyes have been known to have lustful eyes... and, sure, there have been times when my greed has been greater than my integrity... and, sure, I have said many hateful words in anger... and sure I often whine and moan and complain against God and against others... and sure I often live life in pursuit of my own selfish desires... but I think I am basically a good person, and I’m pretty sure that I am good enough to go to heaven when I die.

- You see, if we are not filled with Christ, we are sure to be filled with unholy thinking and driven into unhealthy living.
- Only the power of Christ is powerful enough to overcome the “strong man” of Satan.
- However, Christ not only drives away the “strong man” of Satan, but He sends the indwelling of the Holy Spirit, who seals every believer forever against the miserable imprisonment of Satan.
 - 1 John 4:4 – “*You, dear children, are from God and have overcome them, because the one who is in you is greater than the one who is in the world.*”
 - Ephesians 1:13-14 – “*And you also were included in Christ when you heard the word of truth, the gospel of your salvation. Having believed, you were*

marked in him with a seal, the promised Holy Spirit, who is a deposit guaranteeing our inheritance until the redemption of those who are God's possession—to the praise of his glory.”

-- v. 27-28 – The Application

- The most blessed people are those who not only hear God's Word they respond to it in obedience.
- In other words, pick a side. Make a stand. Get off the fence and engage in the battle for the glory of God.

Please do not leave here saying, “Hmm, that was interesting... Well, one of these days, I might have to get around to that.” Please see the black and white of your situation today: First of all, each of us is either freed by Christ or imprisoned by the enemy because of our sin. If Christ Jesus is not your Lord, then you dwell in a miserable dungeon guarded by spiritual forces of evil. Would you call out to Christ today and ask Him to overcome your sin and rescue you from eternal death. Only He is mighty to save.

For those of us who have believed in Christ and possess the Holy Spirit: Please do not be deceived into thinking that you can get away with living one way at church and another way when no one from church is around. Let us all, in every word and deed, always remember that at every point of life we either battle with Christ or against Him. We either march in God's army or in Satan's. We either sow or we scatter. Let us live each day with an abundant awareness that, authentic Christian living leaves no place for neutrality.