As we continue our series, “Imitating the Lord”, within the series on the Book of Luke, we are learning what a challenge it is to actually imitate Our Lord. That said, it is still incumbent upon us to do just that.

Let’s see if we can imitate the One we love:

**Luke 11:14-28**

**14 And He was casting out a demon, and it was mute; when the demon had gone out, the mute man spoke; and the crowds were amazed.**

**15 But some of them said, "He casts out demons by Beelzebul, the ruler of the demons."**

**16 Others, to test Him, were demanding of Him a sign from heaven.**

**Accusation-Luke 11:14-16**

This is third recording of miracle of deliverance our Lord performed that elicited from His enemies the accusation that He was in league with Satan. Here are two others:

***Matt 9:32-34***

***32 As they were going out, a mute, demon-possessed man was brought to Him.***

***33 After the demon was cast out, the mute man spoke; and the crowds were amazed, and were saying, "Nothing like this has ever been seen in Israel."***

***34 But the Pharisees were saying, "He casts out the demons by the ruler of the demons."***

***Matt 12:22-24***

***22 Then a demon-possessed man who was blind and mute was brought to Jesus, and He healed him, so that the mute man spoke and saw.***

***23 All the crowds were amazed, and were saying, "This man cannot be the Son of David, can he?"***

***24 But when the Pharisees heard this, they said, "This man casts out demons only by Beelzebul the ruler of the demons."***

Instead of rejoicing that God had sent a Redeemer, the religious leaders were rebelling against the truth of God's Word and seeking to discredit Christ's work and, character. Imagine people being so blind that they could not distinguish a work of God from a work of Satan!

"Beelzebub" was one of the names of the Philistine god Baal which means "lord of flies." A variant is "Beelzebul" which means "lord of the dwelling" and ties in with Christ's illustrations in Luke 11:18-26. The Jews often used this name when referring to Satan.

The request in Luke 11:16 was a part of the accusation. ***"If you are really working for God,"*** they were saying in effect, "prove it by giving us a sign from heaven, not just a miracle on earth." They were tempting God, which is a dangerous thing to do.

**17 But He knew their thoughts and said to them, "Any kingdom divided against itself is laid waste; and a house divided against itself falls.**

**18 "If Satan also is divided against himself, how will his kingdom stand? For you say that I cast out demons by Beelzebul.**

**19 "And if I by Beelzebul cast out demons, by whom do your sons cast them out? So they will be your judges.**

**20 "But if I cast out demons by the finger of God, then the kingdom of God has come upon you.**

**21 "When a strong man, fully armed, guards his own house, his possessions are undisturbed.**

**22 "But when someone stronger than he attacks him and overpowers him, he takes away from him all his armor on which he had relied and distributes his plunder.**

**Refutation Luke 11:17-22**

Jesus answered their charges with three arguments.

* First, their accusation was illogical. Why would Satan fight against himself and divide his own kingdom? (Note that Jesus believes in a real devil who has a kingdom that is strong and united.
* Second, their charges were self-incriminating by what power were the Jews casting out demons? How do their works differ from Christ's works? On the contrary, Christ's miracles show that the kingdom of God is present, not the kingdom of Satan!
* Finally, their accusation was really an admission of His power, for He could not defeat Satan unless He were stronger than Satan. Jesus pictured Satan as a strong man in armor, guarding his palace and his goods. But Jesus invaded Satan's territory, destroyed his armor and weapons, and claimed his spoils! Our Lord has "led ***captivity captive*** and set the prisoners free. Though he is permitted limited authority, Satan is a defeated enemy.

**23 "He who is not with Me is against Me; and he who does not gather with Me, scatters.**

**24 "When the unclean spirit goes out of a man, it passes through waterless places seeking rest, and not finding any, it says, 'I will return to my house from which I came.'**

**25 "And when it comes, it finds it swept and put in order.**

**26 "Then it goes and takes along seven other spirits more evil than itself, and they go in and live there; and the last state of that man becomes worse than the first."**

**27 While Jesus was saying these things, one of the women in the crowd raised her voice and said to Him, "Blessed is the womb that bore You and the breasts at which You nursed."**

**28 But He said, "On the contrary, blessed are those who hear the word of God and observe it."**

**Application Luke 11:23-28**

It is impossible to be neutral in this spiritual war for neutrality means standing against Him. There are two spiritual forces at work in the world, and we must choose between them. Satan is scattering and destroying, but Jesus Christ is gathering and building. We must make a choice, and if we choose to make no choice, we are really choosing against Him.

We’ve seen this before in **Deuteronomy30:15-20:**

***15 "See, I have set before you today life and prosperity, and death and adversity;***

***16 in that I command you today to love the Lord your God, to walk in His ways and to keep His commandments and His statutes and His judgments, that you may live and multiply, and that the Lord your God may bless you in the land where you are entering to possess it.***

***17 "But if your heart turns away and you will not obey, but are drawn away and worship other gods and serve them,***

***18 I declare to you today that you shall surely perish. You will not prolong your days in the land where you are crossing the Jordan to enter and possess it.***

***19 "I call heaven and earth to witness against you today, that I have set before you life and death, the blessing and the curse. So choose life in order that you may live, you and your descendants,***

***20 by loving the Lord your God, by obeying His voice, and by holding fast to Him; for this is your life and the length of your days, that you may live in the land which the Lord swore to your fathers, to Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob, to give them."***

**Back to Jesus:**

Jesus illustrated the danger of neutrality by telling the story of the man and the demon. The man's body was the demon's "house". For some unknown reason, the demonic tenant decided to leave his "house" and go elsewhere. The man's condition improved immediately, but the man did not invite God to come and dwell within. In other words, the man remained neutral. What happened? The demon returned with seven other demons worse than himself, and the man's condition was abominable.

***"Neutrality in religion is always cowardice," wrote Oswald Chambers. "God turns the cowardice of a desired neutrality into terror."***

Taking sides with Jesus means much more than saying the right things, like the woman who cried, "Blessed is the womb that bore You, and the breasts which nursed You". She was certainly sincere, but that was not enough. We take sides with Jesus Christ when we hear His Word and obey it in love, commitment and truth.