

11. October 2019

“A stronger had to come!”

*Lk 11, 15-26*

*But some of them said, 'It is through Beelzebul, the prince of devils, that he drives devils out.' Others asked him, as a test, for a sign from heaven; but, knowing what they were thinking, he said to them, 'Any kingdom which is divided against itself is heading for ruin, and house collapses against house. So, too, with Satan: if he is divided against himself, how can his kingdom last? - since you claim that it is through Beelzebul that I drive devils out. Now if it is through Beelzebul that I drive devils out, through whom do your own sons drive them out? They shall be your judges, then. But if it is through the finger of God that I drive devils out, then the kingdom of God has indeed caught you unawares. So long as a strong man fully armed guards his own home, his goods are undisturbed; but when someone stronger than himself attacks and defeats him, the stronger man takes away all the weapons he relied on and shares out his spoil. Anyone who is not with me is against me; and anyone who does not gather in with me throws away. When an unclean spirit goes out of someone it wanders through waterless country looking for a place to rest, and not finding one it says, 'I will go back to the home I came from.' But on arrival, finding it swept and tidied, it then goes off and brings seven other spirits more wicked than itself, and they go in and set up house there, and so that person ends up worse off than before.'*

Jesus does not leave us in doubt that there are powers of darkness. All attempts to understand this reality only as inherent symbols of evil are false and misleading. There are the concrete fallen angels whom we call demons who can take over a powerful influence on humans. Not always are they as perceptible as we hear in the Gospel today, or as other gospel passages attest, so that evictions of demons are sometimes associated with corresponding signs, e.g. with loud screaming, etc.!

However, the influence of the demons is often much more subtle. The goal is always to lead man away from God and to capture him in sin wherever possible. All the efforts of the God-hostile powers have this goal in mind, to draw people into their own turmoil against God. In their delusion, they can not love God, but try to destroy everything that carries the image of God. Since God called all things into existence, hatred is directed against all created things, for the testimony of God can be read everywhere if one has eyes to see.

Man is created according to the image of God, and therefore, in particular, a witness of God. Every soul reflects God's glory, and some mystics speak of the delight of God at the sight of his soul created by him. Maybe we can understand it a bit, if we enjoy the sight of a small child, regardless if it is our own child!

If we are aware of this reality, which is very present but not at all omnipotent, then some are clearer. Violence against the unborn, gender ideology, which ideologically attacks the holy order of creation of man and woman, the many forms of injustice, the prevailing anti-Christian ideas and much more are not simply human aberrations and errors. They are hostile to God caused by demonic forces and make use of the bad inclinations of men in order to involve them in cooperation, often unconsciously for men.

But the text also points to the solution. There must come a stronger one. The stronger is the Lord Himself. and he has already come. He frees from the devil; the powers of darkness are bound by his word.

When we consciously hand over to the Lord the guidance of our lives and remain therein, then all areas of our being are penetrated by him. The Holy Spirit will clean up everything that may yet have effects of a dark influence in us. He will also help us to overcome our original sinful negative inclinations so that the demons will not find something they can take advantage of in their favor.

If we consciously take up the fight in our Lord and face the forces of darkness wherever we perceive them, then God's light will spread. This does not only apply in the personal area, because we are not alone in our fight. We can do a lot with our prayers and not only defend against the forces of darkness. The name of the Lord is a terror to the powers of darkness. If we call his name, those powers are confronted with the stronger and thus weakened.