



# Potomac Hills

## Community Church, PCA

RELEVANT • RELATIONAL • REAL

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## What Jesus said about Accusations

“Revealed Grace” - a series from Luke  
**Luke 11:14-28**

### **INTRODUCTION: “*What The Deaf Man Heard.*”<sup>1</sup>**

Hallmark Cards does a series of special TV movies around the holidays.

One of my favorites was a movie called “*What The Deaf Man Heard.*”

It was about this 10 year-old boy who saw his mother killed when on a trip. They got off the bus to use the bathroom, and she was attacked and killed. He ran and got back on the bus and went on to her hometown.

Because of the trauma, he stopped speaking.

Her kin had never met him before but they took him in and raised him.

They assumed he was deaf and simply unable to hear or speak.

But he could hear and speak just fine, he simply chose not to.

And he grew up that way. People said **all kinds** of stuff around him because they thought he couldn't hear them. But not only could he hear every word, he had a phenomenal memory. He never forgot anything.

And this goes on until he's about 35.

Of course there's a great disaster in town, people are hurt, it winds up in court, and he's the only one who's seen it. So he gets called as a witness, and everybody laughs because they think he's deaf and mute.

He walks up to the witness stand; the bailiff comes up and says, “Raise your right hand. Do you swear to tell the truth, the whole truth, and nothing but the truth, so help you God?”

And the deaf and mute man says, “I Do.”

There's this huge gasp in the courtroom.

People shout, “I don't believe it.”

And they're in shock, because he's got dirt on everybody.

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<sup>1</sup> Adapted from Preaching the Word: Luke, Volume 1 by R. Kent Hughes, pages 425-431.

His grandmother, whose been taking care of him for 25 years, faints dead away.

And the preacher, of course, laughs ... because he's known for a while that the guy can hear and speak just fine.

Now that's not exactly what happens this morning's passage, but the setting is similar. A man can't talk ... now he can ... and people don't believe it.

We open the passage this morning with Jesus coming upon "a man who couldn't speak." Now I can't imagine ... being 25 or 35 or 45 or 65 ... and not have uttered a word for **years**? What must have that been like?

We take for granted the ability to talk with other people.

That's just part of normal everyday life.

But this man in Luke 11 couldn't do that. And if he wasn't able to read and write, like most poorer people of his day, then his needs and feelings could only be communicated by a frustrating combination of facial expressions, body language, gestures, and sounds that probably he alone could understand.

In many ways he must have felt like a prisoner in his own body.

And that's probably a good description of this man's existence since his tongue was chained by a demonic spirit that satisfied itself by keeping this man silent. To have never learned to speak is one thing. To have lacked the physical ability to speak is another. But to have your tongue chained by evil is much worse.

And that's the setting for this encounter that Jesus had.

Let's look at ...

### **Luke 11:14-28**

*"One day Jesus cast a demon out of a man who couldn't speak, and the man's voice returned to him. The crowd was amazed, [15] but some said, "No wonder He can cast out demons. He gets His power from Satan, the prince of demons!" [16] Trying to test Jesus, others asked for a miraculous sign from heaven to see if He was from God.*

*[17] He knew their thoughts, so He said, "Any kingdom at war with itself is doomed. A divided home is also doomed. [18] You say I am empowered by the prince of demons. But if Satan is fighting against himself by empowering me to cast out his demons, how can his kingdom survive? [19] And if I am empowered by the prince of demons, what about your own followers? They cast out demons, too, so they will judge you for what you have said. [20] But if I am casting out demons by the power of God, then the Kingdom of God has arrived among you. [21] For when Satan, who is completely armed, guards his palace, it is safe— [22] until someone who is stronger attacks and overpowers him, strips him of his weapons, and carries off his belongings.*

*[23] "Anyone who isn't helping me opposes me, and anyone who isn't working*

*with me is actually working against me.*

*[24] "When an evil spirit leaves a person, it goes into the desert, searching for rest. But when it finds none, it says, 'I will return to the person I came from.' [25] So it returns and finds that its former home is all swept and clean. [26] Then the spirit finds seven other spirits more evil than itself, and they all enter the person and live there. And so that person is worse off than before."*

*[27] As he was speaking, a woman in the crowd called out, "God bless your mother—the womb from which you came, and the breasts that nursed you!"*

*[28] He replied, "But even more blessed are all who hear the word of God and put it into practice."*

We start with a man who can't speak; Jesus miraculously heals him, and then is accused of working for Satan. We're going to work our way through the text and then try to make some applications. We start in ...

#### **v. 14: This is a Real MIRACLE<sup>2</sup>**

*"One day Jesus cast a demon out of a man who couldn't speak, and the man's voice returned to him. The crowd was amazed..."*

We begin with yet another miracle in which Jesus casts out an evil spirit. Having presented this kind of thing several times already, Luke doesn't dwell on the details but rather draws our attention to the responses of those who were watching. Naturally ... many people marveled at what they saw; the text says, "The crowd was amazed." However, being amazed doesn't necessarily mean that they understood or believed in Jesus as the Savior.

While some may have believed, others didn't.

And we see that in ...

#### **v. 15-16: These are Real ACCUSATIONS**

*"... but some said, "No wonder He can cast out demons. He gets His power from Satan, the prince of demons!" [16] Trying to test Jesus, others asked for a miraculous sign from heaven to see if He was from God."*

We see that there were those who tested Jesus by asking for a miraculous sign from heaven, like healing the guy who couldn't speak wasn't **enough**.

You know, that happens several times in the Gospels, Jesus does some miracle and then people say, "You know, if we saw a miracle, then we'd **really** believe." What miracles have we seen so far?

In Luke 4 we saw a demon cast out and Peter's mother-in-law healed.

In Luke 5 we saw a miraculous catch of fish, a leper healed, and a paralytic healed.

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<sup>2</sup> Exposition of the text is largely adapted from Mighty to Save: Discovering God's Grace in the Miracles of Jesus by Richard Phillips, pages 173-188.

In Luke 6 we saw a man with a shriveled hand healed.

In Luke 7 we saw the centurion's servant healed and the widow's son raised from the dead.

In Luke 8 we saw the storm calmed, the demoniac healed, the demons sent into the pigs, a bleeding woman healed, and Jairus' daughter raised from the dead.

In Luke 9 we saw 5,000 people get fed and a boy with an evil spirit healed.

And now the mute man is praising God and yelling "Thank You Jesus" at the top of his lungs. In all of the Gospels there are about 35 different miracles performed by Christ.

"But if you could perform a miraculous sign, **then we would believe.**"

Because the real issue is simply **unbelief.**

And that's how unbelief works ... **it never has enough evidence.**

Sure ... sometimes people do this without thinking. There was a woman in my church in Alabama who lived in this apartment complex for Sr. Citizens. And they would invite different pastors in town to come preach at their Tuesday morning devotional time. I would go and would usually preach whatever I had just preached that Sunday. And inevitably, after I finished, this woman would come up to me and say, "That was really good, you ought to preach that at our church."

Now certainly being asked to preach a sermon I had just preached is not at the same level of asking for a miracle after hearing the mute man speak. This kind of simply demonstrates unbelief.

And the level of unbelief gets even worse in v. 15, and it is with this verse that the whole passage is really dealing with.

Someone says, "*He gets His power from Satan, the prince of demons!*"

Basically, they're saying that the only reason Jesus can drive out demons is because He is in league with Satan.

So who's making these accusations?

Mark says it was the "teachers of the law."

Matthew says it was "the Pharisees."

The picture is clear that this was the religious establishment who came to check out what was going on with the Jesus of Nazareth. They saw what He did and they didn't dispute that a real miracle had taken place. The key question had to do with its source. If it's a real miracle, then it either comes from God or the devil, and these Pharisees are asserting that it's the devil.

The majority of this passage refers to Jesus' rebuke of these false accusations. And it is here that we see ...

### **JESUS' FIVEFOLD REPLY**

There are five points to Jesus' reply and I want to work quickly through each one of them. The first thing Jesus does is overthrow the rational basis of the

accusation. He shows them that the objection is not based on a logical deduction but rather that ...

**v. 17-18: This is Real ANIMOSITY**

*“He knew their thoughts, so He said, “Any kingdom at war with itself is doomed. A divided home is also doomed. [18] You say I am empowered by the prince of demons. But if Satan is fighting against himself by empowering me to cast out his demons, how can his kingdom survive?”*

His point is to expose the illogic of the accusation. How could Jesus be manifesting Satan’s power, when it is Satan who is suffering by His ministry? Is Satan at war within his own kingdom? If he is then he is no longer a concern; his collapse will soon occur and demon possession will cease to be a problem.

But that’s clearly not the case. The sheer ferocity of Jesus’ assault on demonic strongholds, the desperation of their resistance, and the completeness of His victories mark this as real spiritual warfare and no deception.

On top of this, Jesus adds another remark that exposes that ...

**v. 19: This is Real HYPOCRISY**

*“And if I am empowered by the prince of demons, what about your own followers? They cast out demons, too, so they will judge you for what you have said.”*

This seems to acknowledge that Jesus was not the only one casting out demons. In Mark 9 we find the disciples talking about some guy who was casting out demons in Jesus’ name, and Jesus told them not to interfere.

But Jesus’ point, however, is to expose the hypocrisy of the Pharisees.

What they approve of in others they condemn in Jesus. Their argument has fallen apart and now their animosity is exposed for all to see. That’s why Jesus concludes; *“they will judge you for what you have said.”* Which means that their approval of Jewish exorcists condemns their disapproval of Jesus.

Jesus builds upon this in His second point, which is that ...

**v. 20-22: This is Real POWER**

*“But if I am casting out demons by the power of God, then the Kingdom of God has arrived among you. [21] For when Satan, who is completely armed, guards his palace, it is safe— [22] until someone who is stronger attacks and overpowers him, strips him of his weapons, and carries off his belongings.”*

The point is not merely that casting out demons represents God’s power, but that Christ’s coming and the way in which He is defeating Satan **specifically demonstrates** God’s saving reign upon the earth. The “**I**” here is emphatic.

*“If **I** am casting out demons by the power of God,”* He says, *“then the Kingdom of God has arrived among you.”*

He’s telling them that “I’m the One who’s stronger than Satan, who is stripping him of his weapons, who is taking what used to belong to him,” in this

case, people who are freed from Satan's grasp. Apart from a strong deliverer, the devil's hold on his victims is secure ... his possessions are safe.

And that's precisely what we find in the world today.

Until Jesus and the Gospel are proclaimed, the one thing we can be sure of is Satan's unchallenged dominion.

But Jesus flatly asserts that He's **stronger** than the devil. Now that seems implausible to many people, for whom Jesus epitomizes weakness. So how does Jesus, in all His manifest weakness, take away Satan's worldly power?

I mean, Satan is the Deceiver (John 8 and Revelation 12).

He's a liar and the father of lies.

But Jesus is the Truth (John 14) and He says in **John 18:37**, "*I came to bring truth to the world. All who love the truth recognize that what I say is true.*" Jesus is the "Word" and the truth He reveals breaks Satan's hold on untruth.

Truth may seem like something weak, until we realize that the Word of God, the teaching of truth, takes one of Satan's strongest weapons out of his hand.

That is why it is so important for believers, in order to serve God and resist the Devil, to be people of the Book, people who know the Word of God.

Another Biblical description of Satan is "the Accuser" (Zechariah 3).

Accusation is one of Satan's most potent weapons.

He points out our sin, points out our condemnation under God's holy law, and tries to lay hold of us for his own kingdom.

And that seems to be **a big problem**, because Satan's accusations are usually true. We are sinners, and probably guilty of what he's accusing us of.

But the answer is found in the saving work of Christ, when His weakness in allowing Himself to be crucified overcame Satan's strength.

One of the early church fathers, Augustine, observed this very thing when he wrote, "The devil was conquered precisely when he was thought to be conquering, namely, when Christ was crucified. For at that moment the blood of Him, who had no sin at all, was shed for the remission of our sins. The devil deservedly held those whom he had bound by sin to the condition of death. So it happened that One who was guilty of no sin freed them justly from this condemnation."

No more can Satan accuse us for our sins, for we have been redeemed by Christ. Therefore, as **Romans 8:1-2** says, "*So now there is **no condemnation** for those who belong to Christ Jesus. For the power of the life-giving Spirit **has freed you** through Christ Jesus from the power of sin that leads to death.*"

It also seems that part of Jesus' point is to contrast His manner of casting out demons with that of the Jewish exorcists He's just referred to. They relied upon mechanical devices and external means. They burned incense, used various medicines, played music, and so forth. In striking contrast, Jesus cast out demons

*“by the power of God,”* by means of a simple command. He didn’t have to do anything, He just told them to leave. And they left.

In light of this, by wielding the very power of God against the kingdom of Satan, Jesus asserts that they are obliged to acknowledge Him as the Messiah.

Now, Jesus, having overcome the logic of their accusations, having pressed them on the right understanding of His miracles, now makes His own comments, not about the accusations, but about the accusers.

And He says that ...

**v. 23: This forces a Real DECISION**<sup>3</sup>

*“Anyone who isn't helping me opposes me, and anyone who isn't working with me is actually working against me.”*

Now this would have been heard not only by His specific accusers but also by everyone else in the crowd. Those people who were amazed by Jesus but hadn’t yet committed themselves to Him.

He’s letting them know that if they are not for Him, then they are against Him and by implication they are allied with Satan.

The early church included in its public profession of faith, “I renounce you, Satan, and all your works and ways.” The Catholic Church, the Eastern Orthodox Church, and many other liturgical churches still require this renunciation as part of confirmation and baptism rites.

For some reason it has disappeared from most evangelical churches. Consequently, we have mislaid a very important truth: We must not only choose the truth but recognize and renounce the counterfeit. There is no middle ground with truth. Jesus said, “He who is not with Me is against Me.” There are not many paths to God; there is only one way (John 14:6). Christians are not being narrow-minded when they stand on what God has declared.

The literal meaning of repentance is a change of mind. This is not merely mental acknowledgment. The idea is that “I used to think, believe and walk one way, but now I think, believe and walk a new way.” People who say, “I believe the Bible, but I also believe what I learned that is contrary to the Word of God” are deceived and living in bondage.

The first step to freedom in Christ is to renounce previous or current involvement with satanically inspired occultic practices or false religions. Any activity or group, which denies Jesus Christ, offers guidance through any source other than the absolute authority of the written Word of God, or requires secret initiations must be forsaken. No Christian has any business being part of a group

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<sup>3</sup> Section on the early church is adapted from “*No Middle Ground*,” Neil Anderson Daily Devotional from Freedom in Christ Ministries, June 28, 2001, an email newsletter distributed by Crosswalk.com.

that is not completely open about all they do. God does everything in the light because in Him there is no darkness at all. We are to walk in the light.

Finally, Jesus lets them know that ...

**v. 24-26: This has Real CONSEQUENCES**

*"When an evil spirit leaves a person, it goes into the desert, searching for rest. But when it finds none, it says, 'I will return to the person I came from.' [25] So it returns and finds that its former home is all swept and clean. [26] Then the spirit finds seven other spirits more evil than itself, and they all enter the person and live there. And so that person is worse off than before."*

His intent is not to lead us in speculation about the role of demons, but rather to show us that those people who benefit from His work but don't embrace Him with a full commitment will end up worse off than before they started.

If you get rid of the demons, but don't allow Christ to move in and take hold of you, so to speak, then the demons will come back even stronger.

The same can be said for sin.

You can't just get rid of sin. You have to replace it with righteousness. Otherwise the sin will return and become even more difficult to deal with.

The Puritans called them "besetting sins," sins that came back over and over again. John Owen, the great Puritan said, and I'm **wildly** paraphrasing here, "Until Christ cleans the house and takes up residence, its not really clean, the sin is just on vacation, but it will come back all rested up and ready to go. Sin can't be sent away, it must be **slain**."

The scene now is overpowering. Jesus has answered His accusers. No one is smiling, and then something happened that ...

**v. 27-28: This has Really DIFFERENT Consequences**

*"As he was speaking, a woman in the crowd called out, "God bless your mother—the womb from which you came, and the breasts that nursed you!" [28] He replied, "But even more blessed are all who hear the word of God and put it into practice."*

The woman who cried out a blessing to Christ may not have known how similar her blessing was to the one Mary gave herself way back in Luke 1. And Jesus doesn't disagree with her. My guess is that now He smiles. He likes what the woman said. He doesn't reprove her, but improves what she said.

In effect, what He is saying is, "Yes, what you have said is right, but there is a higher truth: she was blessed who bore Me, **"But even more blessed are all who hear the word of God and put it into practice."**

Mary was blessed because she heard the Word of God and obeyed it, and this same blessing rests on those who do the same. This puts the blessings of God within reach of all of us. There are only two steps: hear the Word, do what it says.



And this what the crowd hears.

Now they must choose their consequences.

Follow the accusers or follow Christ?

What choice will you make?

Now I think that we have the same choice to make, and we have to make it everyday. Are we going to follow Christ today?

But isn't it possible that sometimes we **think** we're following Christ and doing all the right things, but in reality we're not. We just don't know it.

**APPLICATION: What Kind of Grace Person are you?** <sup>4</sup>

Do some of us abuse grace in the name of grace?

We want to do something we know is wrong, and we rationalize it by thinking, "Yeah, it may be wrong, but God has to give me grace."

But to be honest, grace is just what we don't want at that point. We don't want to have to come to our senses and repent. What we want is simply pain-avoidance. But grace leads us to repentance, not a nice plan for sin-management.

As the song goes, "Twas Grace that taught my heart to fear, and grace my fears relieved." We don't often think of grace as something that teaches my heart to fear, but the song's right.

Grace starts by showing us our sin ... revealing our sin so that we will recoil from it and **want** to repent. Often it's called "the grace of the Law" because it's in revealing our sin that we're driven to Christ for forgiveness. And that's the "grace my fears relieved" part.

Grace is not a sin-management plan.

But many people view it that way.

They go on year after year in chronic disobedience; letting anger fly without regard for consequences; allowing sinful relational patterns to go unchecked; refusing to live as good stewards of their time and money; always covering up words that hurt other people; all in the name of "grace."

And they are "grace-impaired" people.

You know them.

Some of you may **be** one of them.

They judge you and critique you and remind you of your ragged sinfulness in ways that tear you down, even though they would never say they meant to do that. And they **appear** to be strong people.

But how did Jesus overcome Satan, His main accuser?

His weakness was greater than Satan's strength.

And He tells us in **2 Corinthians 12:9-10**, "*My grace is sufficient for you,*

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<sup>4</sup> Adapted from Love Beyond Reason by John Ortberg, pages 143-147.

*for My power is made perfect in weakness." Therefore I will boast all the more gladly about my weaknesses, so that Christ's power may rest on me. That is why, for Christ's sake, I delight in weaknesses, in insults, in hardships, in persecutions, in difficulties. For when I am weak, then I am strong."* (NIV)

We need to stay close to the cross. We need to regularly examine ourselves, confess our sins, and accept God's words of love and forgiveness.

In short, we need to preach the Gospel to ourselves everyday.

And we need to stay close to "grace-providing" people. We need some people in our lives who accept us, welcome us, and love us ... no matter what. I need some grace-providers. You do too.

You need them because you have "grace-impaired" people in your life.

One of the elders called me up the other night and said, "You are a great Pastor." Well, I'm not sure that's always true, but I needed to hear it that night. And he became for me a dispenser of grace: someone who rejoices when I rejoice and mourns when I mourn ... a grace-provider.

How can you spot a grace-provider?

Grace-providers notice things about you; they pay attention to your heart and your life. They speak truthfully to you – both easy words and hard words, but always in love. And they don't stop loving you, even when they look below the surface and see all that dark sin in your life. They don't get repulsed; they move even closer. You may be a ragged sinner, but you are a ragged sinner who has been freed and no longer stands condemned, and grace-providers never let you forget it.

And most of all, you need to stay close to a grace-provider named Jesus.

**John 1:14** says, talking about Jesus, "*The Word became flesh and made His dwelling among us. We have seen His glory, the glory of the One and Only, who came from the Father, **full of grace and truth.***" (NIV)

Jesus was full of truth. He knew the right thing. He did the right thing.

Finally, the human race saw somebody who knew the right thing, did the right thing, and whose knowing and doing were filled with grace.

And if you consider yourself a follower of Christ, then at some point in your life the ultimate grace-provider showed up and said, "This is for you."

Because once again Luke wants us to see that the Jesus story is not only about Him, but also about us. These texts **reveal** God at work; and show us how God **reveals His power** in order to call people who sometimes act like grace-impaired people ... to "Come, be one of My grace-providing people."

And that's **grace**, because we're getting what we don't deserve.

Luke brings us that same essential message of grace over and over again.

You see, it was **grace** that was wrapped in swaddling clothes and laid in a

manger. It was **grace** that dwelt among us, **grace** that healed the sick, cured the blind, raised the dead, and even opened the mouth of this guy who hadn't talked for years.

It was **grace** that partied with the tax-collectors.

It was **grace** that wouldn't cast the first stone.

And it was **grace** that was nailed to the cross; **grace** that the tomb couldn't hold, **grace** that now sits on the right hand of the Father, and **grace** that will one day come back for you and me.

And when we've been there 10,000 years and every other word has been used up and worn out, we will just be starting to sing about grace.

Why? Because ...

**It's all of grace from beginning to end.**

**And it's all of Grace because it's all of Christ.**

Luke tells the story of how **Jesus revealed that grace**, died to provide it, rose again to bestow it, and will return to establish its presence over all of creation. The church **must show what such grace looks like** ... starting by bringing that grace to those among us who want to be grace-providers, but who are often grace-impaired.

And all who need that grace said, "Amen."