

Sunday Service ~ March 30, 2025

Service for Swansea & Charlestown Presbyterian Church

Welcome & Prayer

As we begin our service of worship this morning let's remind ourselves of the great God we are coming before. So, I am going to start off with a reading from Psalm 46. *"God is our refuge and strength, an ever-present help in trouble. Therefore, we will not fear, though the earth give way and the mountains fall into the heart of the sea, though its waters roar and foam and the mountains quake with their surging. There is a river whose streams make glad the city of God, the holy place where the Most High dwells. God is within her, she will not fall; God will help her at break of day. Nations are in uproar, kingdoms fall; he lifts his voice, the earth melts. The Lord Almighty is with us; the God of Jacob is our fortress. Come and see what the Lord has done, the desolations he has brought on the earth. He makes wars cease to the ends of the earth. He breaks the bow and shatters the spear; he burns the shields with fire. He says, 'Be still, and know that I am God; I will be exalted among the nations, I will be exalted in the earth.' The Lord Almighty is with us; the God of Jacob is our fortress."* (NIV)

Prayer God our Refuge, when human resources fail, you alone remain our sure hope and defence. In the knowledge of your love, grant us courage. We place ourselves in your hands, confident that nothing can separate us from your love. We praise you for Jesus, the Living One, the First and the Last, who was dead, but now is forever alive. Help us, who have not seen, to believe; send us, as you have sent Jesus, to greet the world with the Easter word of peace and to share with all the Spirit's new life of forgiveness. We ask through the Lord Jesus, our Passover and our Peace, who lives and reigns with you in the unity of the Holy Spirit, God for ever and ever. Amen.

Song –Blessed be your name [\(18\) MATT REDMAN - Blessed Be Your Name \(Lyric Video\) - YouTube](#)

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| <p>1. Blessed Be Your Name
In the land that is plentiful
Where Your streams of abundance flow
Blessed be Your name
Blessed Be Your name
When I'm found in the desert place
Though I walk through the wilderness
Blessed Be Your name</p> <p>Chorus:
Every blessing You pour out, I'll
Turn back to praise
When the darkness closes in, Lord
Still I will say
Blessed be the name of the Lord
Blessed be Your name
Blessed be the name of the Lord
Blessed be Your glorious name</p> | <p>2. Blessed be Your name
When the sun's shining down on me
When the world's 'all as it should be'
Blessed be Your name
Blessed be Your name
On the road marked with suffering
Though there's pain in the offering
Blessed be Your name</p> <p>Chorus</p> <p>Bridge x2
You give and take away
You give and take away
My heart will choose to say
Lord blessed be Your name</p> <p>Chorus</p> |
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Bible Reading – Matthew 12:22 – 37 (NIV)

²²"Then they brought him a demon-possessed man who was blind and mute, and Jesus healed him, so that he could both talk and see. ²³All the people were astonished and said, "Could this be the Son of David?"

²⁴ But when the Pharisees heard this, they said, "It is only by Beelzebul, the prince of demons, that this fellow drives out demons." ²⁵ Jesus knew their thoughts and said to them, "Every kingdom divided against itself will be ruined, and every city or household divided against itself will not stand. ²⁶ If Satan drives out Satan, he is divided against himself. How then can his kingdom stand? ²⁷ And if I drive out demons by Beelzebul, by whom do your people drive them out? So then, they will be your judges. ²⁸ But if it is by the Spirit of God that I drive out demons, then the kingdom of God has come upon you. ²⁹ "Or again, how can anyone enter a strong man's house and carry off his possessions unless he first ties up the strong man? Then he can plunder his house. ³⁰ "Whoever is not with me is against me, and whoever does not gather with me scatters. ³¹ And so I tell you, every kind of sin and slander can be forgiven, but blasphemy against the Spirit will not be forgiven. ³² Anyone who speaks a word against the Son of Man will be forgiven, but anyone who speaks against the Holy Spirit will not be forgiven, either in this age or in the age to come. ³³ "Make a tree good and its fruit will be good, or make a tree bad and its fruit will be bad, for a tree is recognized by its fruit. ³⁴ You brood of vipers, how can you who are evil say anything good? For the mouth speaks what the heart is full of. ³⁵ A good man brings good things out of the good stored up in him, and an evil man brings evil things out of the evil stored up in him. ³⁶ But I tell you that everyone will have to give account on the day of judgment for every empty word they have spoken. ³⁷ For by your words you will be acquitted, and by your words you will be condemned."

Announcements

Focus for Month: Love for one another. How do we do that in a practical way? Greet one another (Romans 16:16), Welcome one another (Romans 15:7), Show hospitality to one another (1 Pet 4:9), Have fellowship with one another (1 John 1:7), Live in harmony with one another (Rom 12:16), Be at peace with one another (Mark 9:50), Be kind to one another (Eph 4:32), Forgive one another (Eph 4:32), Bear one another's burdens (Gal 6:2), Care for one another (1 Cor 12:25) & Pray for one another (James 5:16)

Charlestown Church is on the move! This will be our last service at the Charlestown Church for approx. 20 weeks. While the redevelopment happens we will

- worship at the Charlestown Public School, corner of Smith St and Fredrick Sts.
- The kids programme will continue to meet on our current site, either in the Office or the Cottage. Please allow enough time to get to worship on time.
- Kids will complete their programme and be walked down to the school for pick up.
- There is limited parking on site but you can continue to park in the council car park and walk down the street or on the streets around the school
- Bible Studies, Junior Youth, IMPACT youth, and SPARKLERS playgroup will all need to change where they meet and how they meet. Please talk to your leaders about what will happen

Working Bee. To prepare the site for redevelopment, there will be a working bee on Saturday 6th April from 8am. There will be lots and lots of work to do from moving fruit trees to clearing the Church to making a gravel path next to the office. We will need help from all sorts of people with all sorts of abilities. Please come if you are able to.

Annual Congregational Meeting. Will be TODAY from 11:20am at the Charlestown Church. The agenda and reports will be sent to you by email (or available to pick up) TODAY.

New City Catechism: Question 13. Can anyone keep the law perfectly? Since the fall, no mere human has been able to keep the law of God perfectly, but consistently breaks it in thought, word, & deed. Scripture: "None is righteous, no, not one; no one understands; no one seeks for God. All have turned aside; together they have become worthless; no one does good, not even one." (Romans 3:10-12)

Easter Services

17/4 Last Supper Communion Service: 4:30pm (Swansea) & 6pm (Charlestown Office)

19/4 Good Friday: 8am (Swansea) & 9:45am (Charlestown Public School)

20/4 Resurrection Sunday: 8am (Swansea); 9:45am & 6pm (Charlestown Public School)

People News. Mr T has moved into respite for a month to be closer to his daughter in Sydney. If he settles, he might move down there permanently. Emily and Ben Koiya have had a little boy. His name Taji (pronounced Tahdgee). Mother and baby doing well.

Pastoral Prayer

Pray for Myanmar (Population 55 million, Christians, 5 million). Armed conflict and growing military control make life for Christians challenging. Pray that God will enable Christians to endure the ongoing consequences of the coup. That believers caught in the conflict between the warring groups will be peacemakers. That leaders of Myanmar's military will see Jesus as their only source and Saviour.

Pray for Compassion. Please pray for children and their families that they may have hope, dignity and restoration. Pray that they may know they are loved, fearfully and wonderfully made, and that they matter. Pray for justice for the world's most vulnerable. Compassion achieve this by serving vulnerable children living in poverty with a community-first approach. They are child-focused, Christ-centred and church-based.

Pray for Audric, Elise & the girls as they move back in to the manse after all the trouble that they have had with fleas. Pray that the fleas will not come back. Pray that they might settle into their home. Pray that they would get new rhythms as a family. Thank God for their presence amongst us.

Pray that God would open up the eyes of the people in our region and show them his grace and mercy. Pray that Aussies would turn to Jesus for forgiveness. Pray that there would be more workers going out into the harvest field. Pray that Churches would grow and reach out to their communities with the lifesaving gospel.

Bible Reading – Matthew 12:38-50 (NIV)

³⁸ Then some of the Pharisees and teachers of the law said to him, "Teacher, we want to see a sign from you." ³⁹ He answered, "A wicked and adulterous generation asks for a sign! But none will be given it except the sign of the prophet Jonah." ⁴⁰ For as Jonah was three days and three nights in the belly of a huge fish, so the Son of Man will be three days and three nights in the heart of the earth. ⁴¹ The men of Nineveh will stand up at the judgment with this generation and condemn it; for they repented at the preaching of Jonah, and now something greater than Jonah is here. ⁴² The Queen of the South will rise at the judgment with this generation and condemn it; for she came from the ends of the earth to listen to Solomon's wisdom, and now something greater than Solomon is here. ⁴³ "When an impure spirit comes out of a person, it goes through arid places seeking rest and does not find it. ⁴⁴ Then it says, 'I will return to the house I left.' When it arrives, it finds the house unoccupied, swept clean and put in order. ⁴⁵ Then it goes and takes with it seven other spirits more wicked than itself, and they go in and live there. And the final condition of that person is worse than the first. That is how it will be with this wicked generation." ⁴⁶ While Jesus was still talking to the crowd, his mother and brothers stood outside, wanting to speak to him. ⁴⁷ Someone told him, "Your mother and brothers are standing outside, wanting to speak to you." ⁴⁸ He replied to him, "Who is my mother, and who are my brothers?" ⁴⁹ Pointing to his disciples, he said, "Here are my mother and my brothers. ⁵⁰ For whoever does the will of my Father in heaven is my brother and sister and mother."

Song – See the Man <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=bB1RMIB6llg>

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| <p>1. See the man
 Formed by the Father's hand
 Dust turned to flesh
 Filled with his breath
 In the image of God
 Loved and blessed
 Given the very best
 Destined to rule,
 Fill and subdue all of the earth
 But death entered the day
 He ate from the tree
 Condemned all of mankind
 To follow his lead
 But one day a man will come
 And undo what he had done
 One day a Saviour will return</p> <p>2. See the man
 Leaving his father's land
 Sent by the Lord
 Journeys towards
 A promised place
 By his faith
 Would come a nation great
 In numbers surpassed
 All of the stars</p> | <p>Shining in space
 His name would be renowned
 From the east to the west
 And all people on earth
 Through him would be blessed
 And one day a man will come
 To finish what had begun
 One day a Saviour would return</p> <p>3. See the man
 Come from his Father's side
 His word become flesh
 And all his fullness
 Dwelling in him
 God's delight
 Speaking the words of life
 The Kingdom's revealed
 The broken are healed
 The blind given sight
 And for all history's sin
 The righteous is slain
 By his blood, death is defeated
 He's risen again
 And soon he will come again
 And then forever reign
 One day our Saviour will return</p> |
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Sermon – Evil! (Stephen T)

Sermon link: <https://youtu.be/Fv6leEs-DGU>

I was staying with my mum and dad a number of years ago when something heinous happened just 250 metres away. During the night a home was invaded and a husband and wife, along with their two children, was murdered in their beds. And as the police conducted their investigations, they ended up charging a relative of theirs with the offences. And that relative had lived over the back fence from my mum and dad for over a decade.

And it was a massive shock to us all. How can this happen in such a sleepy, community minded suburb, like North Epping? What caused a quiet, mild-mannered man to do such evil? And that's a question we hear asked all the time on the news, isn't it? A murder or an assault or a drive by shooting occurs and the neighbours are left scratching their heads. Nothing like this has ever happened before in our street, they say to the TV reporters. I have no idea what has happened to cause this person to snap and do such an evil thing.

And that's the topic for the last part of Matthew 12. Evil. As you go through our passage today, 3 times you read of demon possession, 4 times about Satan, while blasphemy is mentioned once, evil 3 times and wickedness another 3 times. It's a very dark chapter. But it gives us the chance to talk about why evil happens even in good neighbourhoods. How evil can even lurk inside of our hearts, why it comes out at the worst possible moment & what the solution to evil is. Evil. The world is full of it but let's start with the good news that Jesus

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1. Is stronger than Evil (verses 22-30)

²² "Then they brought him a demon-possessed man who was blind and mute, and Jesus healed him, so that he could both talk and see." ²³ All the people were astonished and said, "Could this be the Son of David?"

Here is a man who is possessed by the devil, by his henchmen the demons and by evil. And this evil affects not just his heart and his head but his eyes and his tongue. Now you can't help but feel sorry for him. But his friends or family bring him to Jesus to see if he could do anything for him. And he can. He heals him. He can now both see and talk.

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You see Jesus is stronger than the demons, more forceful than the devil, more powerful than evil & everyone can see that. They wonder if Jesus is the promised one who would bring in God's kingdom here on earth. Just like David was able to defeat all his enemies around him, so this Jesus seems to have the word even over evil. But the Pharisees are not convinced.

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²⁴ "But when the Pharisees heard this, they said, 'It is only by Beelzebul, the prince of demons, that this fellow drives out demons.'" ²⁵ Jesus knew their thoughts and said to them, "Every kingdom divided against itself will be ruined, and every city or household divided against itself will not stand. ²⁶ If Satan drives out Satan, he is divided against himself. How then can his kingdom stand? ²⁷ And if I drive out demons by Beelzebul, by whom do your people drive them out? So then, they will be your judges."

Jesus tells the Pharisees that they are being both illogical and inconsistent. Illogical because why would the Devil cast out his own demons? It doesn't make any sense. It's working against his plans. He's starting a fight between allies. And it's inconsistent. Because when the Pharisee's own followers are casting out demons, the Pharisees don't accuse them of using Satan's power, do they? And their followers' miracles are not as great as Jesus' miracles. So, if their miracles are due to the power of God, Jesus' miracles must be even more so.

No, it is pretty obvious what is going on here. It is the Lord who is behind the works of Jesus not Satan. It's the kingdom of God that is breaking in here. Satan, the world's strong man, is being both driven out and tied up. And his house, the world, is being plundered. He is losing control over the things that used to be his. What's more it is not Satan's power that is behind these healings it is the Spirit of God. Remember those words because in the next paragraph that we will be very important. God's Spirit is more powerful than the devil's evil.

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Which means ³⁰ "Whoever is not with me is against me, and whoever does not gather with me scatters." If you are not on Jesus side, you are actually on Satan's side. There is no such thing as a neutral side in this war. There are no Switzerland's allowed. You are either for Jesus or against Jesus. There is no middle ground.

Now this is a really good place to start as we talk about evil. Jesus is stronger than evil. God is more powerful than the devil. But you must make a decision whose side you are on. There is a line in the sand and you need to work out which side of the line you are on. You see in a way Christ is a bit like a magnet.

He will draw you to himself and you will be on his side or your heart will rebel against him and you will find yourself on the other side. Jesus is

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2. Stronger than evil & there is something that is **Unforgivably evil (verses 31-32)**

³¹ *"And so, I tell you, every kind of sin and slander can be forgiven."* Wow that's good news, isn't it? Every kind of sin and slander can be forgiven. Adam was forgiven for his disobedience. Noah for his drunkenness. Abraham for his lack of faithfulness to his wife. Moses for his rashness. David for his murder. Peter for his denials.

The apostle Paul says in 1 Timothy 1 that he was *"a blasphemer, a persecutor and a violent man"* but he was shown mercy and grace. Every kind of sin and slander can be forgiven. Whatever you have done can be forgiven. It might not be forgiven by your country, your church, your community, your family or even by yourself. But it can be forgiven by Jesus. He went to the cross to forgive you that sin. But there is one sin that just can't be forgiven.

"But blasphemy against the Spirit will not be forgiven." ³² *Anyone who speaks a word against the Son of Man will be forgiven, but anyone who speaks against the Holy Spirit will not be forgiven, either in this age or in the age to come."* There is such a thing as the unforgivable sin. And that is the sin that the Pharisees are incredibly close to committing right now. Remember they were saying that the work of the Holy Spirit was actually the work of Satan?

They are saying the power within Jesus was actually the power of Satan. Before their very eyes they see God's power and they are saying that it is actually the power of the evil one. And if you have that mindset, if you persevere in that attitude, you will never look to the Spirit's help to restore your relationship with God. The combination of irrefutable proof and intentional rejection means you have committed the unpardonable sin. And it's unpardonable because you are unwilling to tread the path that leads to your pardon.

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Rejecting the claims of Jesus is not unpardonable. But a persistent denial of the work of the Spirit in Jesus' life, will lead to permanent condemnation. Which sort of means that if you are worried about whether you have ever committed the unforgivable sin, then almost certainly you haven't! Because this sin is committed by someone who thinks good is evil and so doesn't even want to consider the help of the Holy Spirit.

And that means evil has completely taken hold of you. You might seem outwardly a good person, a moral person, an upright person. But if you are not on God's side you are on the devil's side. Which means you are one of the devil's people. Which means inside of you is

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3. An evil heart (verses 33-37)

³³ *"Make a tree good and its fruit will be good, or make a tree bad and its fruit will be bad, for a tree is recognized by its fruit."* ³⁴ *You brood of vipers, how can you who are evil say anything good? For the mouth speaks what the heart is full of."*

Jesus' point is, as the root, so the fruit. If a tree is bearing good apples, it is because the DNA structure that comes from the roots is good. But if the tree is bearing bad or poor fruit, its DNA has obviously been corrupted. Or put it into terms we can understand, as the heart, so the tongue and the hands and the feet. The key thing is not our actions, but what is driving our actions. It's not the outside that's important, it's what's on the inside & that's where it is extremely difficult because I can't see my insides & I definitely can't see your insides either.

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Jeremiah 17:9 says, *"The heart is deceitful above all things and beyond cure. Who can understand it?"* I don't know why I do certain things; they just happen. I don't always know why I say certain things, they just come out. And so, if I have a good heart, mostly good things will come out of it but if I have an evil heart, then evil things will spring forth. For

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³⁵ *"A good man brings good things out of the good stored up in him, and an evil man brings evil things out of the evil stored up in him. ³⁶ But I tell you that everyone will have to give account on the day of judgment for every empty word they have spoken. ³⁷ For by your words you will be acquitted, and by your words you will be condemned."*

The heart is like the water supply and the tongue is like the hose. Our values, our priorities, our thoughts and attitudes that are housed in our hearts will supply our tongues and our hands and our feet with the actions based on what is deep within us.

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Charles Spurgeon once put it this way. *"Look at an acorn. What do you see in the acorn?... When you look into an acorn you will see an ocean of wood... inside the acorn is a tree, a huge tree. And every single bit of that tree is in that acorn all scrunched up... Not only that, but on the tree that is in there are thousands of other acorns. And each acorn is another tree which means that inside that acorn is not only another tree but one thousand other trees and each one of them is a thousand other trees and he says, one acorn has the power to cover the entire world with an ocean of wood. That's how much power is in there."*

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But this is where I think it gets really interesting for Spurgeon continues. *"But if that acorn falls on the pavement, within a couple of days it rots. All of its power goes to nothing. It doesn't mean that the power is not there. To see the power, to understand the power, it has to actually fall on the soil; it has to get watered and so on."*

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And so, Spurgeon applies this to the human heart and let me use the words that Tim Keller uses from his study of Spurgeon's illustration of the acorn. Keller says, *"inside every one of us is the ability for enormous evil given the correct ingredients for that evil to fully develop."*

Wow. When I first heard Keller say that I pushed back from it. *"Inside every one of us is the ability for enormous evil given the correct ingredients for that evil to fully develop."* Inside our hearts is where the power to do evil comes from. And given the right conditions, the right stresses, the right pressure, the right companions, you and I are all capable of doing heinous things. It is just that God has saved most of us from those pressures and from those conditions. Praise God. But we can point to any major criminal and say "there but for the grace of God goes I."

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In a segment on the American version of 60 minutes, Mike Wallace was documenting the story of Adolf Eichmann, the Nazi SS officer in charge of Jewish extermination. Here was a man who did the most unspeakable evil to his fellow humanity. But got away with it for decades before being caught and facing trial. And the question that Mike Wallace wanted to know was, how is it possible for a man like Eichman to act in this way? Was he a monster? A madman or was he perhaps something even more terrifying? Was he a normal man?

Wallace interview Yehiel Dinur, a concentration camp survivor who had testified against Eichmann at his trial. Dinur recalled walking into the courtroom, weeping uncontrollably and then collapsing on the floor. He eventually got up to give his evidence but he explained to Wallace sometime later, "I was afraid about myself; I saw that I am capable of doing this. I am exactly like he." Wallace concluded the segment by saying "Eichmann is in all of us."

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Given the right conditions, Eichmann is in me. Given the wrong circumstances, Eichmann is also in you. Nobel prize winning author Aleksandr Solzhenitsyn once wrote, *“the line separating good and evil passes not through states, nor through classes, nor through political parties either – but right through every human heart.”*

And as evidence for that, let’s look again at the Pharisees, good men, upright men, religious men, who are interested in serving God and leading their nation back to God. Who are now attributing evil to Jesus. Who have allowed the evil in their hearts to take root and blind them to the things of God. Who are now saying the miracle of a man who can talk and see was not due to God but to the devil. And who will now begin to plot to kill a man like Jesus.

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4. And that leads them to make **an evil request (verses 38-42)**

³⁸ *“Then some of the Pharisees and teachers of the law said to him, “Teacher, we want to see a sign from you.”* ³⁹ *He answered, “A wicked and adulterous generation asks for a sign! But none will be given it except the sign of the prophet Jonah.”* ⁴⁰ *For as Jonah was three days and three nights in the belly of a huge fish, so the Son of Man will be three days and three nights in the heart of the earth.”*

The Pharisees have just seen Jesus heal a demon possessed man but that is not enough, they want a sign. Earlier in the chapter Jesus had healed a crippled man but they wanted even more proof that he was from God. All the miracles up to now had not been good enough, because they were blind and their hearts were crippled. But Jesus was not going to play this faithless game with them. Instead, he points out that Jonah once had a death, burial and resurrection experience inside a big fish and that will point to the death, burial and resurrection experience that Jesus will have inside the heart of the earth. The only sign that will conclusively prove that Jesus is from God is his death and resurrection.

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Now please don’t get caught up with the three days and three nights expression. Just as Jonah was in the belly of the whale for three days and three nights so the son of man will be three days and three nights in the heart of the earth. The expression is not talking about 72 hours exactly, for the Jews considered any part of the day registered as a whole day, and a whole night. So, with the day beginning a sundown, when Jesus died on a Friday afternoon, that is one day, he was in the tomb all day Saturday, that’s a second day and Jesus rising to life before dawn on the Sunday morning that’s the third day.

What they are asking for, is wicked, according to verse 39. Its evil. Because they can’t see God at work in Jesus. They have no room for Jesus in their life. And that’s evil. We might think that murder, drug trafficking, stealing and the like is evil but Jesus says asking for a sign is wicked, speaking against the Spirit is blasphemous, having an evil heart is the problem. So

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5. Make sure you are not **controlled by evil**

⁴³ *“When an impure spirit comes out of a person, it goes through arid places seeking rest and does not find it.”* ⁴⁴ *Then it says, ‘I will return to the house I left.’ When it arrives, it finds the house unoccupied, swept clean and put in order.”* ⁴⁵ *Then it goes and takes with it seven other spirits more wicked than itself, and they go in and live there. And the final condition of that person is worse than the first. That is how it will be with this wicked generation.”*

You see it is no use cleaning the house, unless you fill the house with the right things. You can get rid of an evil spirit from out of your house. But if you don’t replace it with something else, it will just invite its mates around and the house will be in an even worse state. And this is a picture of the human heart. You might clean yourself up and make sure your behaviour looks good. You might follow God’s laws and attempt to keep his commands. But if God is not inside of you, it will do you absolutely no good.

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You see its not enough to have a clean house, you must have the right tenant. Not enough to have the right behaviour, you must have God inside your heart. The Pharisees you see had tried to clean up their act by following a whole bunch of laws, which they supposed would help them before God. But evil was still in their hearts and God wasn't. Which means that legalism can be demonic. Anything that isn't based on God, is following the devil.

A number of years ago I was asked to exorcise a haunted house. Now that is not something I am asked to do every day. And I don't believe I have the power over the demons but Jesus does. So, I went around and talked to them about it. I quoted this passage and said, I could pray that the demons go but unless you are going to fill this house with something stronger than the demons, with God's Holy Spirit for example, the demons might go & get their mates to come and live and you might be in a worse state. So, before I pray for the demons to leave your house, lets talk about you putting your trust in Jesus and having Jesus inside of you.

Guess what? They didn't want to put their trust in Jesus, so I left them without attempting to exorcise the demons. You see Jesus' ministry while on earth wasn't just to heal or give sight or drive out demons. It was to clean up someone's life and invite Himself into their hearts.

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6. And that is Jesus' ultimate **solution to evil is (verses 46-50)**

⁴⁶ "While Jesus was still talking to the crowd, his mother and brothers stood outside, wanting to speak to him. ⁴⁷ Someone told him, "Your mother and brothers are standing outside, wanting to speak to you." ⁴⁸ He replied to him, "Who is my mother, and who are my brothers?" ⁴⁹ Pointing to his disciples, he said, "Here are my mother and my brothers. ⁵⁰ For whoever does the will of my Father in heaven is my brother and sister and mother."

You see when you put your trust in the Lord as your heavenly Father, then Jesus becomes your brother. The Spirit comes into your heart for good. You are now a part of the family of God. And that doesn't mean you never do evil anymore but it does mean you are no longer controlled by evil. You have God's help, father, son and Holy Spirit to help you say no. To enable you to resist temptation. To strengthen you to live good and God honouring lives.

And that means' family is not first. Our partners are not first. Our job is not first. Our homes are not first. Our money is not first. For Jesus is now first. The evil has been cleaned away from the centre of our lives and God's Holy Spirit is now living within our heart, the seat of our power. And when we do the wrong thing, we can repent of that sin and it will be forgiven. And over time more and more good fruit comes out from the roots of our faith.

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But it also means that we will still live in a world that is full of good and evil. And given the right circumstances, the right conditions and companions, all sorts of terrible evil will be done all around us. Horrible thing will happen in our homes, in our suburbs, in our country, in our world, even in our Churches.

So why doesn't God just get rid of all the evil? Well, if the line that separates good from evil truly does go through every heart, it would mean getting rid of all of us and all of our hearts. Instead, God's solution was to become one of us. Die on our behalf, Be placed in the tomb for our sins. Go to hell because of all we have done but on the third day rise to life victorious over death, over sin, over the devil and over evil.

And so being religious is not the answer. And being from a good family is not the answer. It is only Jesus that is the answer. He has power over Satan. He is the one that will give you a good heart. He is the one that forgives you your sins. He is the one who brings you into the family of God.

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Do you see that? And whoever is not with him is against him. So come to Him all who are weary and heavy laden and he will give us rest. He will yoke us to himself. And he will help us live in a world of good and evil, of God and Satan. And one day he invites his family to live with Him forever in a world devoid of evil. Won't that be absolutely amazing? Let us pray.

Song – Christus Victor (Amen) <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=KF5knxzKCVw>

1. O Most High, King of the ages
Great I AM, God of wonders
By the blood You have redeemed us
Led us through mighty waters
Our strength, our song, our sure salvation

[Chorus]

Now to the Lamb upon the throne
Be blessing, honor, glory, power
For the battle You have won
Hallelujah! Amen

2. O Most High, dwelling among us
Son of man sent for sinners
By Your blood You have redeemed us
Spotless Lamb, mighty Savior
Who lived, who died, who rose victorious

Chorus

Bridge

With every tribe and every tongue
We join the anthem of the angels
In the triumph of the Son
Hallelujah! Amen

3. O Most High, King of the nations
Robed in praise, crowned with splendor
On that day who will not tremble?
When You stand Christ the Victor
Who was, and is, and is forever

Chorus

Bridge

Amen, amen, amen
Amen, amen, amen, amen
Amen, amen, amen
Amen, amen, amen, amen

Chorus

Bridge

Benediction

⁴⁸ He replied to him, "Who is my mother, and who are my brothers?" ⁴⁹ Pointing to his disciples, he said, "Here are my mother and my brothers. ⁵⁰ For whoever does the will of my Father in heaven is my brother and sister and mother. " (Matthew 12: 48-50)