

2026-08-23: 3rd Sunday of Mesore - A House Divided

Introduction

The Gospel today has the Lord Jesus casting out demons, and He is accused of casting them out by Beelzebub. Of course, He was really casting out the demons by His authority as God. But to respond to these false accusations, the Lord answered by saying "How can Satan cast out Satan? If a kingdom is divided against itself, that kingdom cannot stand. And if a house is divided against itself, that house cannot stand." (Mark 3:23-25)

There is a message for us in this verse - a house divided against itself cannot stand.

Since the very beginning, God called us to choose between two paths, but instead of choosing, sometimes we think we can live in both world! But a kingdom divided against itself cannot stand. A house divided against itself cannot stand. A life divided against itself cannot stand.

How do I recognize if my house is divided? If my life is divided? And then how do I fix it?

We'll have three points for Recognizing the Divided House, and three points for the solution.

A Divided House

1 - God Gives Us a Choice

From the very beginning, in the garden of Eden, God gave to humanity free will. And this free will is the ability to choose - life or death. He told Adam and Eve that if they eat from the fruit of the tree, they would surely die. So their choice was either death or life.

In the time of Noah, the same thing happened - Noah preached for 100 years that the rain would come and all would perish. So their choice was either perish or live.

Moses at the end of his life, inspired by the Holy Spirit, placed this choice in the hand of Israel very explicitly.

"See, I have set before you today life and good, death and evil, in that I command you today to love the Lord your God, to walk in His ways, and to keep His commandments, His statutes, and His judgments, that you may live and multiply; and the Lord your God will bless you in the land which you go to possess... I call heaven and earth as witness today against you, that I have set before you life and death, blessing and cursing; therefore choose life, that both you and your descendants may live."

We have choices every single day in our life.

- Should I respond to this argument?
- Should I meet up with this person?
- Should I go to this place?
- Should I watch this video?
- Should I say this word?

These are all choices!

- Light or darkness?
- Holiness or sin?
- Christ or the world?
- God is the Lord or I am the Lord?
- Narrow way or the broad path!

2 - All or Nothing

The problem is that sometimes we try to choose both. We think we can have it both ways.

Sometimes when we have choices to make, we falter between two opinions. Israel never completely rejected God... they just chose to have and worship other idols alongside Him. When God was convenient, then He is their God. But if Baal was convenient, then Baal! So Elijah responded to them:

"How long will you falter between two opinions? If the Lord is God, follow Him; but if Baal, follow him." But the people answered him not a word." (1 Kings 18:21)

So Elijah brought two bulls. And he allowed the priests of Baal to offer to their god, but of course, there was no voice, no one answered. Then he built his altar, dug a trench around it, put the bull on it and soaked it all with water four times! And he called out to the Lord and the Lord answered with a consuming fire.

We have many idols in our life. These are things that we prioritize over God... over our spiritual life, over our Church life and attending Liturgies and Vespers:

- Money
- Entertainment
- Fame/Ego
- Education/Career
- Friendships and Social Life

What is my priority? How long do I falter between two opinions?

3 - The Divided Man is Unstable

"He is a double-minded man, unstable in all his ways." (James 1:8)

"No one can serve two masters; for either he will hate the one and love the other, or else he will be loyal to the one and despise the other. You cannot serve God and mammon." (Matthew 6:25)

- God says forgive... but my pride tells me no.
- God says flee from evil... but my passions tell me to stay.
- God says to give... but my greediness tells me to keep.
- God says follow me... but the world says to follow it.

This leads to the internal struggle:

- I constantly have this war inside of me that doesn't stop
- I can't overcome sin and I keep going back to Abouna with the same list
- I delay repentance
- I am spiritually inconsistent... one day I am on fire and another day I am ice cold
- Struggling to make decisions or to know God's will in my life
- I make excuses for what I know is wrong, trying to justify
- It is exhausting

These are the symptoms of the divided person. What is the solution?

Choose

"Teach me Your way, O Lord; I will walk in Your truth; Unite my heart to fear Your name." (Psalm 86:11)

The solution is to choose! How do I get there?

1 - Identify What is holding me from God

- "Let us search out and examine our ways, and turn back to the Lord." (Lamentations 3:40)
- App on my phone that I spend too much time on, that is forming my ideas, that is filling my mind with unnecessary questions, debates, etc.
- Someone I spend time with that brings out of me gossiping, complaining, negative attitude
- A habit that I know leads me to sin
- Entertainment that fills my mind with things contrary to the way of life
- A desire or ambition that I am unwilling to surrender

2 - Take an Action

- After every confession, every sermon, every meeting, every liturgy, every Bible reading - let me take an action in my life.
- Like Zaccheaus
 - "Look, Lord, I give half of my goods to the poor; and if I have taken anything from anyone by false accusation, I restore fourfold." (Luke 19:8)
- It doesn't have to be a big action like Zaccheaus - it can be a small action.
- Small consistent actions shape our life...

- Small consistent actions become habits
- Habits become behavior
- Behavior shapes our life
- An action is just a commitment I make with myself
 - I will come early to the Liturgy
 - I will attend Vespers regularly
 - I will stop going to such and such a place
 - I will avoid phone calls with such and such person
 - I will pray from my Agpeya a little every morning
 - I will cut out media that has certain content in it
 - I will remove this app or block this website

3 - Align myself with the Church and Her practices

I will never be perfect, but the Lord will not ask me if I was perfect, He will ask if I repented. He will ask if I struggled, if I strived, if I ran the race and finished it.

The Church gives us a rhythm to continually turn us back to God and orient our mind to Him.

- Church Calendar
 - Instead of letting my calendar determine whether or not I am in the church, let the church determine my calendar!
 - I know for a fact that Saturday evenings are reserved for Vespers and Prayer and preparing myself for the Divine Liturgy. So when something comes up on Saturday evening, I don't have to make a decision - I don't have to falter between two opinions, I don't have to justify or have an internal war... it's already set. But if the Church Calendar is not my calendar, then when my friend comes and says "we should go out on Saturday evenings" - of course I'm going to be torn... I'm going to wonder if I should or shouldn't... I'm going to have an internal war... I'm going to have to actively DECIDE to leave the Vespers and Tasbeha...
 - I know for a fact that a fasting period is coming up... So when a vacation comes up during a fast, I don't have to make a decision - I am fasting, so this is not in the books for me. It's easy to make the decision - no thinking, no faltering. The Church calendar is my calendar.
 - This doesn't take away the effort from the Christian life... there is still a temptation and there is still a struggle. But I have already CHOSEN which side I am on.
- Spiritual Canon
 - Fasting
 - Reading the Scripture
 - We have the Bible Study to support you, and the Bible contest
 - Spiritual Books
 - We have reading contests to support you
 - Hymns of the Church
 - We have hymns classes to support you and the hymns contest
 - Praying with the Agpeya

- These orient my daily life to God
 - Every day I am reminded of who I am, and who I belong to, and who I am following and which direction I am walking in
- Spiritual Meetings
 - Youth Meeting, BRAVE Men, Virtuous Women, St Joseph Meeting - there is a meeting for everyone!
 - These all give structure in my life to constantly re-assess myself, and to continue in my growth - growing in knowledge and in wisdom, growing in community, growing in virtue

These practices help me to live out a decision I have already made... I choose Christ. I choose Life. I choose Light. I choose Obedience.

May the Lord grant us to make the decision and choose to prioritize Him in our life. Let us identify our weaknesses, take actions against them and align our life with the Undivided House - the Church.

Glory be to God, forever. Amen.

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