More than empty and clean

Questions:

1. Read Luke 11:20-23 and Colossians 2:15. Who are the strong man and his possessions and who is someone stronger? How does the strong man arm and guard his possessions? Why is it beneficial for us to follow Jesus?
2. Read Luke 11:24-26. Why would people invite Jesus to overpower the enemy but not invite him to live in their hearts? What is the danger of doing it?
3. Read the quote from C S Lewis. Does it apply to you? Share your thoughts with your group.

=== sermon ===

(page 1) Jesus is stronger than your stronghold

Luke 11:21 “When a strong man, fully armed, guards his own house, his possessions are safe. 22 But when someone stronger attacks and overpowers him, he takes away the armor in which the man trusted and divides up his plunder.

1. Lent- Emptied for fullness
   1. Emptied is for fullness of Christ
   2. A passage to remind us the importance of both
2. The world is under the devil
   1. 1 John 5:19 We know that we are children of God, and that the whole world is under the control of the evil one.
   2. Saved to God’s household
   3. Continue to be saved everyday in God’s home
   4. 20 But if I drive out demons by the finger of God, then the kingdom of God has come upon you.
3. Fear not, Jesus is stronger
   1. Colossians 2:15 And having disarmed the powers and authorities, he made a public spectacle of them, triumphing over them by the cross.
4. Sin, influence of sins, the temptations of the world, and the lies and accusations of the devil, can all be cleansed by pleading Christ to save

(page 2) If not Jesus with whom shall I go?

Luke 11:23 “Whoever is not with me is against me, and whoever does not gather with me scatters.

1. If Jesus is who he said he is, everyone need to answer this question
   1. Instead of an item to choose from
   2. A Yes and No question, instead of one of the ten thousand choices
2. If God creates, Jesus saves, then he has my life in control
   1. Human wisdom are precious, but the starting point, the foundation decides where you end up
   2. My friend’s journey of searching for truth and meaning of life- as a monk

(page 3) A heart has to be filled- with Jesus

Luke 11:25 “When it arrives, it finds the house swept clean and put in order. 26 Then it goes and takes seven other spirits more wicked than itself, and they go in and live there.

1. It’s a picture who want to be healed but does not want Jesus
2. Apparently demons regard empty houses as opportunity
   1. Demons are powerless unless we invite them over
   2. A house without Jesus is empty
   3. Our hearts yearn to be filled with something
3. It is vitally important to not only empty ourselves but to be filled with Jesus
   1. When accusation comes, pray/read/fast and rebuke (you no good)
   2. When lie comes, pray/read/fast and rebuke (God no good)
   3. When temptations come, pray/read/fast and rebuke (pride/greed/lust is good)
   4. God did not create us to be damaged and saved, he created us to triumph with Jesus

(page 4)

“Imagine yourself as a living house. God comes in to rebuild that house. At first, perhaps, you can understand what He is doing. He is getting the drains right and stopping the leaks in the roof and so on; you knew that those jobs needed doing and so you are not surprised. But presently He starts knocking the house about in a way that hurts abominably and does not seem to make any sense. What on earth is He up to? The explanation is that He is building quite a different house from the one you thought of - throwing out a new wing here, putting on an extra floor there, running up towers, making courtyards. You thought you were being made into a decent little cottage: but He is building a palace. He intends to come and live in it Himself.” –C S Lewis

20 But if I drive 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 safe. 22 But when someone stronger attacks and overpowers him, he takes away the armor in which the man trusted and divides up his plunder. 23 “Whoever is not with me is against me, and whoever does not gather with me scatters. 24 “When an impure spirit comes out of a person, it goes through arid places seeking rest and does not find it. Then it says, ‘I will return to the house I left.’ 25 When it arrives, it finds the house swept clean and put in order. 26 Then it goes and takes 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.”

3. (Luk 11:20-23) Jesus proclaims His strength over all demonic forces.

“But if I cast out demons with the finger of God, surely the kingdom of God has come upon you. When a strong man, fully armed, guards his own palace, his goods are in peace. But when a stronger than he comes upon him and overcomes him, he takes from him all his armor in which he trusted, and divides his spoils. He who is not with Me is against Me, and he who does not gather with Me scatters.”

a. But if I cast out demons with the finger of God, surely the kingdom of God has come upon you: With this Jesus answered the charge that He was in partnership with the Devil. He said, “I’m not under Satan, instead, I’m proving that I am stronger than he is.”

i. Jesus did not suggest the slightest doubt when He said, “If I cast out demons.” As Pate suggests, the idea is more since than if. “Thus, ‘since by the finger of God I cast out demons, then the kingdom of God has come upon you.’” (Pate)

b. But when a stronger than he comes upon him and overcomes him: In the picture Jesus used, Satan is the strong man, who guards what belongs to him. Jesus’ ministry, both in the case of casting the demon out of the man who was mute and in the broader sense, did the work of defeating this strong man.

c. But when a stronger than he comes: Jesus is the One who is stronger than he (Satan, the strong man of Luke 11:21). Jesus spoke about His work in overcoming Satan on several different stages:

i. He comes upon him: Jesus engaged Satan in battle, even on the ground of what seemed to belong to Satan (such as demon possessed people).

ii. And overcomes him: Jesus simply defeated this strong man, showing to everyone that He is stronger than he. Jesus made it clear that He was the stronger man who was not captive under the strong man. His message was, “I’m not under Satan’s power. Instead, I’m proving that I am stronger than he is by casting him out of those he has possessed.”

iii. He takes from him all his armor in which he trusted: Jesus not only defeated Satan on our behalf, He also disarmed him. As Colossians 2:15 says, Having disarmed principalities and powers, He made a public spectacle of them, triumphing over them in it [the cross].

iv. And divides his spoils: Satan will never get to keep or enjoy the battle-spoil from his momentary victory. Jesus’ victory over the strong man is complete. Jesus looks at every life delivered from Satan’s domination and says, “I’m plundering the kingdom of Satan one life at a time.” There is nothing in our life that must stay under Satan’s domination. The One who binds the strong man and divides his spoils is our risen Lord.

d. He who is not with Me is against Me, and he who does not gather with Me scatters: If Jesus is stronger than Satan, then each person is confronted by a decision: with whom will they partner? Will we be with Jesus or will we be against Him? Will we work for Jesus or will we work against Him?

i. “In the conflict against the powers of darkness there is no room for neutrality.” (Geldenhuys)

ii. In this sense, to be undecided is to be decided. There is no neutral ground; we are either with Jesus or against Him. There is no luxury of guarded neutrality.

iii. If Satan is the strong man, and Jesus is stronger than Satan is, there are two strong forces at work, trying to win our allegiance. We will embrace one or the other, intentionally or unintentionally.

4. (Luk 11:24-26) Jesus tells more about the dynamics of demonic possession.

“When an unclean spirit goes out of a man, he goes through dry places, seeking rest; and finding none, he says, ‘I will return to my house from which I came.’ And when he comes, he finds it swept and put in order. Then he goes and takes with him seven other spirits more wicked than himself, and they enter and dwell there; and the last state of that man is worse than the first.”

a. When an unclean spirit goes out of a man: This is the picture of a person delivered from a demon, but not yet filled with Jesus. It is a picture of a person who tries to be neutral. They say they are not for Satan, but they are also not for Jesus. Jesus shows us that this is impossible.

b. I will return to my house from which I came: Apparently, demons regard vacant places as opportunities. For some reason they want to inhabit bodies. We can suppose that this is for the same reason why the vandal wants a spray can, or a violent man wants a gun – a body is a weapon a demon can use in their attack against God.

i. “It is probably implied that the house was unoccupied…the context of Luke 11:25 seems to assume that the reason the demon could return to the house was because it was vacant.” (Pate)

c. The last state of that man is worse than the first: Jesus revealed the danger of delivering a person from demonic possession without filling their life with Jesus. They can end up worse than before.

i. The heart of man has a vacuum-like nature to it. It has to be filled. If we empty our heart from evil without filling it with Jesus and His good, evil will rush in again to fill it – and sometimes worse evil than before.

ii. Therefore, in answering those who accused Him or working by the power of Satan, Jesus told them that He had not merely come to fight against evil, but to bring God’s good into our hearts. He did not come to merely empty the house, but to fill it with Himself.

1. Follow Jesus, choose victory
2. Lent empting
   1. A man’s heart has the nature to be filled
   2. We need to be filled with Christ
3. Jesus told them that He had not merely come to fight against evil, but to bring God’s good into our hearts. He did not come to merely empty the house, but to fill it with Himself.

“Imagine yourself as a living house. God comes in to rebuild that house. At first, perhaps, you can understand what He is doing. He is getting the drains right and stopping the leaks in the roof and so on; you knew that those jobs needed doing and so you are not surprised. But presently He starts knocking the house about in a way that hurts abominably and does not seem to make any sense. What on earth is He up to? The explanation is that He is building quite a different house from the one you thought of - throwing out a new wing here, putting on an extra floor there, running up towers, making courtyards. You thought you were being made into a decent little cottage: but He is building a palace. He intends to come and live in it Himself.”