

Vote with Our Decisions Third Week in Ordinary Time Monday, January 27, 2014
8:15 AM 2 Sm 5:1-7, 10; **Mk 3:22-30** (The good is never accomplished without effort, sacrifice, suffering, and surrender to a higher power, namely, the power of God, the Holy Spirit here.)

“For they had said, ‘He has an unclean spirit.’”

One of the problems that modern people have with understanding Christ, his mission, the meaning of redemption, the meaning of atonement, and so on is that modern people don't take seriously this idea of Satan and the kingdom of Satan. It just strikes them as being implausible, mythological, metaphorical, but not really real. This is not the judgment of the gospels. **In the gospels the kingdom of Satan is very real.** It is not visible, but it's very real. And not only that, but it is the **principal target of Jesus' battles.** He has come to attack, to counter, to defeat the kingdom of Satan.

If you don't take that seriously—the reality of the kingdom of Satan—well, then **what is really Jesus all about?** Well, then we have to **make up something else.** What has often happened in modern thinking is Jesus turns out to be just a really nice guy, really good person, but not really from God, or not from God any more than anybody else who is a good person.

So this is actually a very crucial idea, **crucial issue: this spiritual power that evil forces have over the life of humanity.** In fact, if you read the whole Bible from this point of view, you see what the Bible is saying is that from the very beginning when God created this beautiful world and everything was good, it became spoiled early on because some sort of evil spilled over into it from somewhere else. **Some battle between good and evil had already ensued and now it spills over into this beautiful creation that God made,** where when it was finished he said, “And it was good.” It becomes spoiled. It becomes marred. And

all of a sudden all kinds of malice and hatred and ill-will starts springing up all over the place even at the very beginning.

Ultimately, I don't believe any of us can understand this. I don't believe anyone ever has. But there is something there that we have to acknowledge: that **we are really a small factor in a very grand drama.** And we have a very important role to play, but it is not the central role. There is a battle between good and evil, and we all will vote on which one we want to win. We don't vote with our mouths. **We vote with our actions, with our choices, with our decisions.** And when we decide to vote that the good win, that means that we have to follow on the road that Christ has already laid out, the road you might say Christ is, which involves a certain amount of sacrifice and suffering, because **the good is never accomplished without effort, sacrifice, suffering, and surrender to a higher power, namely, the power of God, the Holy Spirit here.**

Most people who actually vote for evil don't really vote for evil for the sake of evil. They **vote for evil for the sake of their own personal, little good,** their own comfort, their own prosperity, their own wealth, whatever it is, some little good they think is important enough to trump the good of the whole of God's plan in creation and providence. But even human beings are **capable of looking right into the face of the Holy Spirit and blaspheming—**conscious, deliberate rejection of God face to face. Now this Jesus says, **“But whoever blasphemes against the Holy Spirit will never have forgiveness, but is guilty of an everlasting sin.”**