

**Rev. T. Jefferson Rogers Jr.**  
**Text: Matthew 12:43-45**  
**Title: The Empty House!**

Intro: The heart of man is a house in which dwells the Spirit of God or the spirit of Satan. The Spirit of God and the spirit of Satan cannot occupy the same house at the same time. When evil has taken up its residence there, good is absent.

Backdrop: In Matthew 12:22, Jesus had cast a demon out of a man who was blind and mute. As a result, Jesus healed the man so that he could both see and speak. The religious leaders—the scribes and Pharisees who saw this miracle—said that Jesus had cast the demon out of the man “by Beelzebub, the ruler of the demons” (v. 24). In other words, they claimed that He did this by the power of the devil. Jesus responded by disproving their ludicrous and blasphemous accusation, and by warning them that they were only exposing the evilness of their own hearts.

In verses 43-45, Jesus compares His generation to a demon possessed man. Like the demon possessed man, the people of His day were getting worse instead of better. The Pharisees and scribes because of their constant rejection of Jesus’ message, ministry, and miracles grew worse and worse. Therefore, their latter state was worse than the former. When people reject Jesus expect them to get worse and worse. Paul said in 2 Timothy 3:12-13, ***“Everyone who wants to live a godly life in Christ Jesus will be persecuted, while evildoers and imposters will go from bad to worse, deceiving and being deceived.”***

- I. **The Reality of Unclean Spirits (demons):** Jesus did not treat demons as if they were symbols and superstition. Jesus regarded demons as real beings that operate in a demonic realm. Demons are supernatural beings that influences in an evil way.

Jesus called demons unclean spirits. The word “unclean” is far more vigorous in the original language. It means filthy, disgusting, and dangerous.

**Demons can indwell and influence both humans and animals.** Example: Matthew 8:28-32 says, ***“When he arrived at the other side in the region of the Gadarenes, two demon-possessed men coming from the tombs met him. They were so violent that no one could pass that way. <sup>29</sup>“What do you want with us, Son of God?” They shouted. “Have you come here to torture us before the appointed time?” <sup>30</sup>Some distance from them a large herd of pigs was feeding. <sup>31</sup>The demons begged Jesus, “If you drive us out, send us into the herd of pigs.” <sup>32</sup>He said to them, “Go!” So, they came out and went into the pigs, and the whole herd rushed down the steep bank into the lake and died in the water.”*** Demons possess people and animals to accomplish their evil desires.

**Demons can exist inside and outside of humans.** Demons have no physical means to express themselves except through human or animal agents. In other words,

demons cannot accomplish their evil desires through inanimate objects. Demons are restless and uneasy outside human and animal host.

**Demons are deceitful spirits** according to 1 Timothy 4:1. 1 Timothy 4:1 says, *“The Spirit is clearly saying that in later times some will abandon the faith and follow deceiving spirits and things taught by demons.”*

**Demons are thinking personalities, not impersonal forces.**

**Demons differ in power and wickedness.**

Verse 43, Jesus did not say how it came to be that the demon went out of the man. All is said is that the unclean spirit (demon) went out of the man. Outside of the man the demon was restless. Jesus said that the demon went through “dry places”—seeking rest but finding none. The Bible seems to suggest to us that it is a kind of torture for a demon to roam about without inhabiting someone.

**II. The Risk of Having an Unregenerate Heart:** Unregenerate heart is an empty house. The truth is a person’s heart can be cleansed and not filled. Verse 44 says, *“Then he saith, I will return into my house from whence I came out; and when he is come, he finds it empty, swept, and garnished.”* According to the teachings of Jesus the demon returned and found the house empty.

A. The demon claimed ownership of the empty house. The demon said, “I will return into **my** house.” Notice the personal pronoun the demon used— “my.” An empty house is symbolic of a heart that is not occupied by the Holy Spirit. If God’s Spirit does not occupy your heart an unclean spirit will. Notice the heart was **empty** of God, of Christ, of His Holy Spirit. It was **swept** from love, lowliness, meekness, and all the components of the fruit of the Spirit. It was **garnished** with cheerfulness and security. The demon upon returning to his house saw no sign of life—the house was a clean empty house.

The empty house describes moral people who have experienced change through self-reformation. The scribes and Pharisees were very moral. However, morality can be used by demons to make people think they are good enough and do not need Jesus to go to heaven. Therefore, when there is right behavior without regeneration, it is hard for a moral person to see his or her need for Jesus Christ.

Morality often blinds people to the fact they need Jesus as Savior. Most Jews of Jesus’ day were so satisfied with their morality and religious traditions they could not see a need for Him. Morality without Jesus dooms people to hell.

B. The dwelling of Jesus, God, and the Holy Spirit: the heart needs to be filled with a new tenant to keep the old tenant out.

The Holy Spirit begins to indwell man only upon repentance and acceptance of Christ as personal Lord and Savior.

Man was not created to be empty in his inner being. Man was created to be indwelt by the Spirit of God.

Paul said in Ephesians 3:16-21, ***“He would grant you, according to the riches of His glory, to be strengthened with might through His Spirit in the inner man, that Christ may dwell in your hearts through faith; that you, being rooted and grounded in love, may be able to comprehend with all the saints what is the width and length and depth and height—to know the love of Christ which passes all knowledge; that you may be filled with all the fullness of God. Now to Him who is able to do exceedingly abundantly above all that we ask or think according to the power that works in us, to Him be the glory in the church by Christ Jesus to all generations, forever and ever. Amen.”***

- C. The demon invites more demons into the empty house: verse 45 says, ***“Then goes he, and take with himself seven other spirits more wicked than himself, and they enter in and dwell there: and the last state of the man is worse than the first.”***

Demons can communicate with each other to combine forces. One demon joined with a group of seven other spirits making the last state of the victim worse than before.

Jesus said, “Even so shall it be also unto this wicked generation.” The point Jesus drives home is the struggle against Satan will turn to surrender to Satan when God’s solution for sin is rejected. Jesus condemned His generation of people who would not receive Him. He also warns of the danger of giving evacuation to sin and unclean spirits without inviting Him to take up residence in your heart!