

Matthew 12:43-45. the Parable of the Unclean Spirit.

by Favell Lee Mortimer

The parable of the unclean spirit highlights the importance of true conversion and the dangers of outward piety without inner change, emphasizing the need for faith and watching and praying to avoid temptation.

Scripture: Matthew 12:43, Mark 13:33, Luke 11:24, Ephesians 6:12, 1 John 5:18

Topics: "Spiritual Warfare", "Demonic Influence"

Description

Favell Lee Mortimer preaches on the importance of guarding our hearts against evil spirits, using the analogy of a house where unclean spirits dwell. The parable emphasizes the need for true conversion and the presence of Jesus in our hearts as the only protection from Satan's malice. Those who do not heed the warning risk falling prey to demonic influences, as seen in the tragic stories of King Saul and the wicked Pharisees.

Transcript

It was in this alarming manner that our Savior concluded his rebukes to the wicked Pharisees. We can scarcely call this short history a parable, because it appears to be a literal account of an event that has taken place. Still it is a parable, because it is partly figurative--the heart of a man is likened to a house. And is it really true that unclean spirits make the hearts of men their habitation? How can we doubt what our Savior has so plainly declared?

Sometimes an evil spirit forsakes his habitation. This devil having left his house, traveled far through dry, or desert places, but found no rest. It seems probable that in the course of his wanderings he found no opportunity of injuring souls. Our enemy, we know, walks about seeking whom he may devour. Sometimes there is a restraint laid upon him, and he cannot perpetrate the evil that he desires; for he can do nothing without the permission of God. Perhaps this devil had left the man, hoping to make new conquests, and to increase the number of his victims; but when disappointed, he thinks of returning to his old abode. He says, "I will return unto my house, whence I came out." He claims the heart as his own property; he says, "My house." He returns and finds no obstacle to regaining possession of the soul he once inhabited. The house is not the less acceptable to him, because it is swept and garnished, or adorned. Nothing pleases Satan more than a show of piety in a wicked heart. The unclean spirit is not satisfied to dwell alone, but finds seven of his fellows to share his spoil. He selects some more wicked

than himself, as his associates. There are degrees of wickedness even among devils, and no doubt pre-eminence in wickedness is their glory. It had been better for this miserable man, if the first inhabitant of his heart had never left it. But O! how infinitely better would it have been for him, if, when the devil had left him, he had opened his heart to the gracious Savior! Jesus is willing to come whenever he is invited; often he stands and knocks, and no man opens the door, and at length he withdraws, no more to return. Then the wretched soul must become the prey of demons. Even as a house forsaken by man soon becomes the habitation of beasts and birds, so does the heart, when Jesus is absent, become the habitation of the spirits of hell.

The greater part of the Pharisees did not profit from the warning Jesus gave them; they grew more and more wicked; they crucified the Lord of glory, and persecuted his apostles. But let us profit from it, and never count ourselves safe, except Jesus reign in our hearts. Saul, the King of Israel, appears to have been such a man as our Savior described in this parable. The evil spirit that once tormented him, departed for a season, but soon returned and rendered him more wicked than before. All the evening of his days was spent in malicious persecutions of the innocent David, until he filled up the measure of his iniquity by consulting the witch of Endor.

Real conversion of the heart is the only preservative from Satan's malice. True believers alone are secure. There are evil days, days of peculiar temptation that come upon them, but neither seven wicked spirits, nor seventy times seven, can harm the heart fortified by the towers and bulwarks of faith. It is written, "He who is begotten of God keeps himself, and that wicked one touches him not," (1 John 5:18.) And how does he keep himself? He remembers his Lord's command, "Watch and pray, that you enter not into temptation."

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