

Speaker: Pastor Buster Brown

Today's Message: The Final State is Worse Than The Beginning

Today's Text: Matthew 12:43-45

“When the unclean spirit has gone out of a person, it passes through waterless places seeking rest, but finds none. Then it says, ‘I will return to my house from which I came.’ And when it comes, it finds the house empty, swept, and put in order. Then it goes and brings with it seven other spirits more evil than itself, and they enter and dwell there, and the last state of that person is worse than the first. So also will it be with this evil generation.” **Matthew 12:43-45**

As Christ conflictual interchange with the Pharisees comes to a close (Matthew 12:1-45), the Lord gives an illustration regarding a house that has been put in order, but is not safe from demonic deception. A Pharisee was a member of the “purity party” in Judaism, that insisted upon obedience to the Mosaic law and the traditions. They were busy **COMMENDING THEMSELVES** to one another and earning the favor of God.

Marks of a Pharisee

1. Offended by the gospel of g_____ > Earning the approval of God.
2. Outward a_____ was vitally important > Commending themselves to one another.
3. Always activated their i_____ lawyer; which led to contempt for other people.

“He also told this parable to some who trusted in themselves that they were righteous, and treated others with contempt.” **Luke 18:9**

“Woe to you, scribes and Pharisees, hypocrites! For you clean the outside of the cup and the plate, but inside they are full of greed and self-indulgence. You blind Pharisee! First clean the inside of the cup and the plate, that the outside also may be clean.

“Woe to you, scribes and Pharisees, hypocrites! For you are like whitewashed tombs, which outwardly appear beautiful, but within are full of dead people's bones and all uncleanness. So you also outwardly appear righteous to others, but within you are full of hypocrisy and lawlessness.” **Matthew 23:25-28**

4. Their teaching was man-c_____, as they glorified teachings that were not in Scripture.

“Good works are only such as God hath commanded in His holy Word,(1) and not such as, without the warrant thereof, are devised by men, out of blind zeal, or upon any pretence of good intention. Good works are only such as God hath commanded in His holy Word,(1) and not such as, without the warrant thereof, are devised by men, out of blind zeal, or upon any pretence of good intention. These good works, done in obedience to God's commandments, are the fruits and evidences of a true and lively faith: and by them believers manifest their thankfulness...”

Westminster Confession of Faith, Section 1, Article 1-2a

5. They were zealous, but the f_____ was wrong.

“According to Christian teachers, the essential vice, the utmost evil, is Pride. Unchastity, anger, greed, drunkenness and all that, are mere fleabites in comparison: it was through Pride that the devil became the devil: Pride leads to every other vice: it is the complete anti-God state of mind.” **CS Lewis**, *Mere Christianity*, pp. 109, 110

“The devil laughs. He is perfectly content to see you becoming chaste and brave and self-controlled provided, all the time, he is setting up in you the Dictatorship of Pride --just as he would be quite content to see your chilblains cured if he was allowed, in return, to give you cancer. For Pride is spiritual cancer: it eats up the very possibility of love, or contentment, or even common sense.” **CS Lewis**, *Mere Christianity*, p. 112

ANSWER KEY: grace, appearance, inner, centered, foundation

General Principles from the Text

1. The “house” was not owned by the strong reality of Christ.

“The absence of Christ will indeed make it night, dark as darkness itself, in the midst of all other glowing consolations.” **John Owen**, Vol.2, p. 128

“When a soul prays and mediates, searches the promises in private; when it with earnestness and diligence attend to all ordinances and public (the Lord’s Supper and worship), and, all to get one glimpse of the face of Jesus Christ, and this is done in vain, it is a sad condition.” **John Owen**, Vol.2, p. 130

2. Self/arrogance had moved into the life of the Pharisees.
3. The final condition is worse than the first.
4. Self-made religious observances and extreme discipline, and even bodily mutilation, are ultimately of no value in bringing about the life God desires.

“(referring to things that all perish as they are used)—according to human precepts and teachings? These have indeed an appearance of wisdom in promoting self-made religion and asceticism and severity to the body, but they are of no value in stopping the indulgence of the flesh.” **Colossians 2:22-23**

Casually Uncaring Perfunctory versus Desperate for the Empowering of Christ

Passionless versus Enthusiastic

Proud versus Broken