

Reformation without Christ Is a Bad Thing

Luke 11:24-26

“When the unclean spirit goes out of a person, it passes through waterless places seeking rest, and not finding any, it says, ‘I will return to my house from which I came.’ And when it comes, it finds it swept and put in order. Then it goes and takes *along* seven other spirits more evil than itself, and they go in and live there; *and the last state of that man becomes worse than the first.*”

The three verses which compose our text are difficult for some to understand. There’s a common belief that the “person” in v. 24 is the same person Jesus heals of a demoniac in the first part of this chapter.

I. The person referred to in this text is not the same man Jesus healed in Luke 11:1.

There are a few ways via the text that we can determine there are two separate people in reference.

- A. Here the unclean spirit goes out of his own free will – “When the unclean spirit goes out ...”
In the first part of this chapter, the demon doesn’t go out, it is cast out. That’s a huge difference.
- B. Here the unclean spirit walks through dry, desert places, to seek rest.
In the first part of this chapter the demon is taken captive and put in chains, his goods captured.
- C. Here the unclean spirit returns to *his house* (“I will return to my house”) from which he came out.
In the first part of this chapter the house captured by Christ is His and there is no coming back.
- D. Here the unclean returns and finds his house in good condition.
This is a picture of a person in spiritual bondage, ruled by the father of lies, who finds life to be a journey of personal failure and trouble, brought on by forces unknown and unseen in one’s life, but in a moment of clarity, makes a promise to reform with no thought of Jesus Christ as Lord.

II. The person *reformed* does change, but his house is not inhabited by the Spirit of God.

There are a few clues that when the demon comes back to his former house things are different.

- A. The house is swept— “it finds it swept” (v. 25).
The house is not washed clean, but only swept! What sinners need is a washing, not a sweeping.
- B. The house is in order – literally “garnished” (v. 25). This speaks of a remodeling, not a rebuilding.
Those without Christ are “whitewashed tombs” (Jesus to the Pharisees); dead on the inside.
- C. The house is open to other spirits – “it brings seven spirits more wicked than itself” (v. 26).
Without the infilling of Christ during promises to reform, the soul is more susceptible to evil.
- D. The house *becomes* worse off – “the last state of that man becomes worse than the first” (v. 26).
If I could, I would urge every person promising to reform one’s life – with no thought of receiving Christ as Lord of one’s life – to refrain from making such promises because of what you become.

III. This worst case scenario makes a person more in need of the power of Christ.

The grace of God, even in the worst case, is sufficient for the soul; you aren’t beyond His reach.

“I lay a stone in Zion, a tested stone, a precious cornerstone for a sure foundation; ***the one who relies on it will never be stricken with panic***” (Isaiah 28:16). Do you see yourself in this text?

Old Covenant Israel is a type or foreshadowing of a sinner in need of God’s sovereign grace.

God says to Hosea about Israel - “Ephraim is joined to idols: leave him alone” (Hosea 4:17).

But yet God responds, “How can I give you up, Ephraim? How can I hand you over, Israel? All my compassion is aroused. I will not carry out my fierce anger, nor will I devastate Ephraim again.

For I am God, and not a man— the Holy One among you (Hosea 11:8-9). This is God toward you.

“O Israel, you have destroyed yourself; but in Me is your help” (Hosea 13:9).