

## **MATTHEW 12: 43-45**

### **THE DANGER OF LEGALISTIC RELIGION**

Introduction:

These sobering words of Jesus were addressed to religious people. They are a warning of the danger of legalistic religion. The religious practices that Jesus encountered among the Jews of His day were primarily outward and rules oriented. Jesus labeled that generation as “adulterous and evil,”

Adulterous would point to an alliance with someone besides God. Israel was the wife of Yahweh, but they were giving their love to other things besides God. Evil would point to their conduct—it was selfish and full of pride.

This little insightful parable about an empty house uncovers the serious danger of legalistic religion. If the purpose of the Devil is to keep people from a saving relationship with God, he has not better tool than legalistic religion. It plays right into his evil purposes. Let us learn from our Lord about this danger. Since human nature has a tendency to prefer legalistic religion to the real thing, we should be especially attentive.

- I. IT GIVES A PERSON A FALSE SENSE OF SECURITY.
  1. It gives the person the sense of having done something.
  2. It centers its trust on what has been done.

II. IT EXPOSES A PERSON TO DEMONIC INFLUENCE.

1. It provides not protection from demonic invasion.
2. The demons are comfortable in self-centered religion.

III. IT MISSES OUT ON THE REALITY OF THE KINGDOM OF GOD.

1. The kingdom of God involves the indwelling of the Spirit of God.
2. The kingdom of God must be received, not earned.
3. The kingdom of God produces a righteous life—not just a clean life.