

If you have this book (*The Life of Christ in Stereo: The Four Gospels Combined As One*), it won't be adequate for you tonight. I have always felt that the gentleman who wrote this book did a work of genius, but I've always been mystified as to why he puts Matthew 13 near the beginning and then puts Matthew 12 well past the middle of the book. I'm going to pick up Matthew 12 and put it back here where Matthew 13 is. I want to read an incident from the Lord's life, and you'll find it in your Bible in Matthew 12:43. Alright, I think I'll read just a little bit. I'm on page 116 if you have the whole book.

I'm going to go back and pick up a passage that goes with it. Just before that, it's on page 115, if you have the whole book. *Yet some of them, the Pharisees, on hearing it, said, "This fellow does not cast out, this fellow does not cast out the demons. It is only by Beelzebub, the prince of demons." But Jesus, knowing their faults, said to them, "Every kingdom divided against itself is brought to desolation, and a city or house divided against itself will in no case stand." And so if Satan has cast out Satan, he is divided against himself. How then shall his kingdom stand?*

Now then, I'm going to pick up Matthew 12:43. *When the unclean spirit has gone out of a man, it passes through waterless places seeking rest. And finding none, it then says, "I will return to my house out of which I came." And when it comes, it finds the house empty, swept, and decorated. Then it goes and takes along with its seven other spirits, more wicked than itself, and they enter the dwelling there, and the last state of that man becomes worse than the first. Thus also shall it be with this wicked generation."*

I think you would agree with me. This is a passage of scripture that none of us would normally turn to for edification. This certainly seems to be no place to be talking about the fellowship of the Father with the Son. I will even have to say that because of a concern, a burden I have on my heart for some of you, I think tonight I'm going to do a little applying. I've tried to hold it until now without application.

I think you first have to see the scene. The Lord is ministering. He's somewhere in Galilee. The Pharisees are quite upset with Him about the Sabbath and many other things. Now, not being able to explain why He has this power upon Him, they say it's of the devil. I would urge us all never to say that unless somebody has declared that He has done it by the devil; then you can go ahead and agree with him. But I doubt that there is a brother or sister in here who has been a Christian 20 or 25 or 30 years, but somebody has said that accusation against you. Would you not say that? And it hurt, didn't it? It hurt, didn't it? So why do you want to say it about someone else? Because it hurts them, too. You don't know, and I don't know. None of us knows. We really don't know. It's not too smart to be so smart that you can know what is the Lord and what is not the Lord. The Pharisees were really good at this, and their grandchildren live today. When you can't explain something wonderful going on, you just call it the devil.

I want to say a word to you, charismatics. When I was a little kid growing up, charismatics were being criticized everywhere, and some really rough things were being said about you. About seven or eight years ago, you got in the saddle. You moved from being the persecuted minority to the

point that the charismatics are now dominating evangelical Christianity...and guess what you're doing? Now, you're persecuting. Whereas when I was a kid, you were the persecutee; now you're the persecutor. You shouldn't do that. So don't do it anymore.

The Pharisees are standing there and saying this to the Lord. He knows about the Lord. He knows within Him this is going on. There is obviously fellowship going on between Himself and the Father. I am going to hold that part until the end, but I would like to make some applications here. Here is a very strange story, if ever there was one. I think we have to realize how true that story was in its temporal setting. I think the Lord had a sense, a knowing of what would happen in the near future at the hands of those very men. So let us look at the very men who made this statement, and see if we can learn a lesson for our own lives.

These men, the word Pharisee...to us...if we had little dials hooked up to us and you said the word Pharisee, our little register would just do like this; it's a negative word, an extremely negative word for all of us. But they didn't feel that way about themselves. They were the Christians of that generation. And that's not all. I have a notion that a lot of them had a lot of things to say about how they became Pharisees. You're not born a Pharisee. You're molded into a Pharisee. You don't go out and do all those religious things unless you have some sort of motivation. That's tough being a Pharisee. Those of you who are ex-Pharisees, and I hope there are some here, you've given up the law. How many of you have really been not only a follower of those in the law, but you have been a Moses? You have been leading people into the law. You have preached against sin.

Well, when I was much younger in the Lord, I heard about a church where the pastor preached against high heels. The ladies in the church responded immediately, and they wanted to know where a high heel stopped being a high heel and when it became a low heel. The pastor's wife got a ruler and helped the sisters measure the shoe so they could figure out what was and wasn't. That is legalism. Nobody will admit it now, but do we have any ex-legalists here? Oh, 1, 2, two honest people. 3, 4, 5, 6, 7, 8, 9, 10.

You have to really have a lot of enthusiasm to be a legalist. You have got to have some kind of testimony. Even if you grew up in a very righteous background or maybe you came out of a very unrighteous background, to become very concerned about right and wrong, you have to have a good reason for it. I think I'm trying to say to you that there were men who could give you a testimony of past experience with God, that they began with God. Some way, whether internal, of course, probably not, but they were Jews, and the Jewish religion was still the established faith of that hour. They had seen something of God, and it drove them. It drove them in the wrong direction. True. But it drove them. They had cleaned up their lives, and they were seeking, according to their knowledge, to be faithful to the God whom they understood. That is correct. Or to put it in another way, they had cast out the demon, and they had cleaned up their house.

We're not going to get into demons tonight. Obviously...some of you won't agree with this... obviously, this is a picture. Some of you may say, "No, this has really happened." Obviously, in the judgment of a Baptist, this is a picture. To you, perhaps it's not, but here are Pharisees who

have cast out their demon, and they have made their house whole. They did something that was probably pleasing to God at one time. Something was taken out of their life, and they immediately began to concentrate on cleaning up an empty interior. I'm going to repeat that: something positive, good, wonderful, and godly happened in their lives. Something was left behind that should have been left behind, and they began concentrating on cleaning up an empty inward being.

I'd like for you to consider that for a moment. Here is the story of cleaning up our inward parts and making them proper. Concentration on putting in order empty inward portions of our being, but that which was cast out came back and saw that the house never looked that clean before. There's nice furniture there now. A few nice antiques, maybe some French provincial furniture, a lovely refrigerator, well-made beds, a lot of food in the refrigerator. There's plenty of room for me here. We used to be a cluttered-up mess with some of my friends; he went back and got a complete number, a complete set of fellow demons. He brought seven of them, and seven is complete. And eight is even more complete than complete. So we now have the man having eight demons within him. What in the world is going on?

The story is very simple. Some men had had contact with God. There had been a moment of something precious in their life that drew them to the living God. They concentrated on cleaning up their lives. They paid attention to keeping an empty internal being in proper order. At some point in their concentration on keeping clean and in order their internal parts, the very thing they threw out slipped back in, and something began to grow in them more wicked than the state that they were in when they touched their god and took the vow of Pharisaism. What do we mean by seven demons and the final state being worse than the beginning? It's really very simple. Although they were in Galilee, there is no question in my mind that those very men stood one day in Jerusalem and cried out, "Crucify Him! Crucify Him! Crucify Him!" and their latter state was worse than their first.

Do you understand? This story is very simple. Good men, religious men who have gone to the living God, have been touched, and something wonderful has happened. The years roll on. They have concentrated on the wrong thing; then something totally different begins to seep in, and in the end, they crucify the very God they pledge themselves to. They crucify Him. That's eight demons. They only cast out one, but eight came to crucify the very Lord whom they had given their hearts and lives to. Well, of course, that's Jewish days. This is the modern day, and that's why I'm a little concerned, and I want to talk to some of you.

Drop all that and let's talk because the principle remains the same, and it remains the same for all of us. It remains the same for you, and for me, for everyone here. Without getting into any theology, the principle here is still the same. You remember when you got saved. You remember how much you loved the Lord. You remember how joyful it was, and it rained every day the blessings of God, and you loved Him, did you not? And you began to respond; maybe you have gone through one of the most wonderful Christian experiences anyone has ever had. The old days

are gone far, far away, and you have known glory...and now has come a dry spell, and that dry spell has been going on for a long, long time.

You're sitting up here in Podunk, Illinois, or Ohio, or Iowa, or Florida, or Texas, or Pennsylvania, or New York, or Massachusetts. Oh, forbid, maybe even Maine. You are still a Christian. You still love the Lord. You have not gone back into sin. You have kept your house in order. You have kept your house in order, but I think the Lord would like for us to know something. You should never, never, never, never keep a well-ordered house. You should not ever, ever, ever care for and keep a beautiful empty home. The home that you care for is a very dangerous place when you care for it and keep it up, and it's empty. Is that clear?

Then you need to live a long, long time. You need to watch people love the Lord, give their hearts to Him, totally saturated in Him—wonderful, glorious times. Then a bitter thing happens; a bad thing happens. They have a testimony of the demon that was thrown out by Christ. The former life you lived, the things the Lord helped you in. Then there comes...either somebody threw you out, excommunicated you, the church you were in collapsed, you moved away, you started backsliding, you lost interest, your enthusiasm died - whatever it was - but you know you're still a Christian. You're just...the things that He did for you and made you while you were rich in Him. You have kept the outward results intact, but there's nothing going on inside.

Leave the place empty long enough, and unwittingly you, the believer, are going to find yourself in a state different from, but as bad as, before you ever met the Lord. Let another 10 years go, and it'll never show because the house will probably stay in order, but if you have eyes to see, 10, 15 years later, in spiritual comparison, you are worse off than you were before you became a Christian.

This was what the Lord was telling those Pharisees: Yes, you met Me. Yes, you changed, and then you put everything in order. But there was nothing internal. The years have rolled by, and instead of being filled inside, you simply have kept the order of redemption. You have kept the results of redemption intact. The house is empty. Well, believe it or not, I'm finished. If you don't have enough sense to apply that to your life, then I can't help you. Brothers and sisters, it's dangerous to have an empty house. No matter how well-ordered it is, the very well-ordered part of it becomes dangerous. I am still a Christian. I still show I am a Christian. But the internal home is empty. Eventually, in spiritual principles, every house gets filled with something, no matter how well-ordered it is.

Now listen to me. I know some of you are deeply hurt and you're bleeding. I know you're hurt and bleeding. A few of you have lost the function of your spirit, or at least it appears that way. And there's no way you can put anything inside that spirit, it seems. I'm very reluctant to use personal illustrations. There have been one or two times in my life when things are pretty rough. Just pretty rough. I think that nothing that I know of steals from our spirit, not even sin, that steals from our spirit, its life, like the injury of other Christians. It seems that Christians have the capacity to inflict upon us the very death of our spirit. Do you understand what I'm saying? That hasn't happened to

everybody, but at least we all know wounds. Alright, I think you agree with me, and I agree with you, and I want to stop and say to you that's not possible. That's not possible.

In the last few weeks, I've heard two people say to me, "Gene, you really make me feel guilty." One brother said to me, "You really make me feel..." and he just used a really low term. I'm sorry to tell you something, but I am incapable of making you feel guilty. I have no needle and syringe with a fluid called guilt that I can inject into you that gives you a sense of guilt. You alone can make yourself feel guilty. No one can make me feel guilty. Nobody can make me feel guilty. You really made me feel like I was at the bottom of the ocean. You really made me feel like I was nothing. The man doesn't breathe who can make me feel like that. The only person who can make me feel like that is me.

Did anybody take a hot poker to you? I need to tell you, dear brother and dear sister, as hard as it happened, the very fact that it happened to you, somehow, you had to play a part in that internal destruction. I have been so destroyed by other Christians when I was much, much younger. I don't think that's possible anymore. It may be. I can't tell. I don't know. But I was flat laid out. I remember what I had to do for spiritual sustenance to keep the room full.

I could have heard every great sermon ever preached, and it would not have turned my Richter scale. It would not have moved. The Bible might as well have been printed on blank pages. Nothing moved, and that went on for weeks, months, and years—no spiritual registration. But I found something. You know what it was? It was music. That's right. It was music. My wife will tell you that I have about a half-dozen records. I'd play one side, turn it over, and play the other. Turn them over and play the other side. Turn them over and let them fall one after another, play them on the other side. 18 hours a day, I listened to that music and the same songs over and over, and every time they played, I cried, and I cried as much the last time I ever heard them as I did the first time. I just sat and cried.

I found a gathering of Christians in Glendale, California. I think it was Saturday night, and it was one of these charismatic groups. This lady was leading the singing; if you can tell me her name, I can tell you the song she wrote. She wrote a song entitled I'll Never Be Lonely Again." Do you know the song? I'll Never Be Lonely. I'll never, never again. No, never again. Don't you know that song? Don't you? Do you know that song? I'll never be lonely again. Well, every Saturday night, her choir would sing that, and I'd sit back there, and from the time they started singing to the time they ended, I sat in the back row and was bawling. That's all I could do. That's all I did.

I don't even know why I told you that, but brother, sister, if there is anything in this world that can make that inward spot be anything but empty, stay with it. No matter how small a thing it is. There is no necessity for you to go on being wounded forever. There is still a living God, and there still are decent Christians, and you're going to have to believe that, or you're never going to get anywhere. Now, I dare say that half the people in this room are dealing with more or less an empty house, and it's still in order, and that's dangerous. You're dealing with an empty house, and it's still dangerous. It's dangerous to have a well-ordered home. Don't do that.

Dear Christian, fill that house up again. Fill it up. Whatever it takes, fill it up. I loved the little part Jeanne Guyon had in her book when she said, "You don't have to be able to read in order to know the Lord as deeply as anyone." You can memorize Psalm 23...oh, it's the Lord's prayer...Our Father, which is in heaven...and she said, "Just feed on that." You don't need a great deal to fill the inward place. It's not difficult. The inward parts of us are not complex, and unlike our souls and bodies, can subsist on very simple foods.

Your head needs a variety of things constantly. Constantly, your spirit can get by on Psalm 23, for you cannot imagine how long...on a song, on anything that has like spirit to it. You need not leave the house in order and empty. Forget the order, peanut. Fill the thing up. Fill it up with something of your Lord. Fill up the empty place with your Lord. Instead of the demon going out and wandering all over the world, why don't you go out and wander all over the world and find that which fills up your inward house? You go wander, and when you see him wandering, you say, "I'm out-wandering you. I'll find more than you will find." And I'll get back there and fill that thing up before you can get in there again.

Let me tell you something so simple. You know, we Christians are fascinating. I can't help but watch, especially preachers. Pray. We've had some fellowship; we're about to leave. "Oh brother, let us have a word of prayer before we go," and just like that, he drops his head and says, "Oh, our Father in heaven, we thank You." And you know, I guess he thinks we're impressed with how quickly he can pray. I watch Christians sometimes in prayer meetings, and they rush into prayer. I step back and look at that, and I think I see an awful lot of running around up here and a lot of speed, almost speeding up this up here in order to get through the prayer. We talk faster in talking to God than we do to anybody else. Well, God's not up here. God's not up here. You're in the wrong place. God's down here.

Why won't you just get alone? Just get alone. Don't pray. Don't ask for anything. When you come into the Lord's presence, there's a good chance you're going to feel a sense of guilt...I haven't prayed for so long, and I sinned today, boy. I sinned big today. It's almost like an internal chamber surrounded by a little bubble of guilt you have to get through. Do you understand what I'm saying? You just have to wait till you get past it. You stand there and say, "Okay, that's part of the fall. I'm waiting for you to go away. You do your little thing, and I'm waiting for you," and then just pass through the guilt. You could also say, "Lord, by Your blood I'm coming," and that little guilt place will open up and let you through.

Well, anyway, just get really quiet before the Lord and leave Uncle Henry and Aunt Nelly and your broken-down car and your flat checkbook and that strange feeling you're getting over here on the right side, and you just know that you know what it is, some awful thing. You lay that aside, and you lay all your worries aside, and you drop your worries, and you drop your thinking, and you wait till your mind slows down, and you just sit there as best you can before your Lord. Just wait till all these outward things cool down a little bit.

“And then what do I do, Gene? Tell me some more. What's the big secret? Something in the Bible I haven't seen. Oh, tell me about prayer now.” Okay, here it comes. You ready? Take one word. One word. One... and that word is Lord. You sit there very quietly, prop your feet up on your ottoman, lean back in your comfortable chair, and wait till everything gets real quiet inside you and up here, and just say, “Lord.” And don't say Lord, Lord, Lord, Lord, Lord, Lord, Lord, Lord, Lord.” And don't say, “Lord, Lord, Lord, Lord or Lord, Lord, Lord.”

You know, we were in Formosa once, and I passed by a shrine, and there was this priest there in front of his little shrine, and he had two sticks, and he was beating them. And that is the Shinto tradition of making a clattering sound to get the attention of its god. You don't need to get His attention. I will tell you your Lord's vulnerable spot. You want to hear your Lord's vulnerable spot? I'll tell you where he's vulnerable 24 hours a day, no matter how dead your spirit is. Just say, “Lord.” And there will be the slightest sense of something. And when that sense has come and glowed...now we're talking about something almost imperceptible...and has begun to dissipate and has dissipated, say it again, and wait.

In a minute, while nobody's looking, say it with all the love you're capable of uttering that word. Love Him. Love Him with that one word. “I want a Cadillac.” That's not love. That's gold digging. My point. No. Not “Now I got Him, I can feel the Lord again. See my list.” No. Just go in there, you poor fallen creature, and love your Lord. Well, then what do I do? Nothing. Just love Him some more. That's all. “Gene, that doesn't work for me.” Do it anyway. “It just doesn't work. I'm not the type... I can't just...” Do it anyway.

Those of you who say, “I don't know where my spirit is,” you sit down. You get alone with the Lord away from everybody. Just get calm. Some of you have got a brain that has never seen below 97 miles an hour, and a tongue that's never seen below 120. We have a saying in East Texas: he never had a thought he didn't speak. Just let the tongue be quiet. Let the mind slow down. Whether you're one of these fast people or a slow person, let it get slower and wait and just begin to speak His name. And as you can, just love Him with His name, and that is your spirit. If you're looking for your spirit, that is your spirit. How will I know? You don't have to know. That is your spirit. What's left when your mind is slowed down, and you're sitting there with nothing else around you, and you are loving your Lord, and there is a sense...that's your spirit.

You need never have an empty, well-ordered home. I believe every brother and sister in this room, maybe with a few exceptions, best within your strength, you have a well-ordered home. For many of you, it's empty. All you need is an ottoman, a big, comfortable chair, a light switch that'll go off for about three or four minutes to calm down, and the Name above every name. That's all you need. I don't see how the Lord could have made His relationship much simpler than that. You can begin there. You can end there. “Gene, what's your secret?” An ottoman. Big stuff. Well, a big, comfortable chair. I don't have an ottoman; I actually put my feet up in the window. Some quiet... day or night. A mind that slows down, and the Name that is above every name. May God keep me from a well-ordered house because I can't handle a well-ordered house. Something's going to come

in. Something awful is going to come into a well-ordered house. And really, you should consider moving heaven and earth if that's all you got right now, because you can't keep it that way forever.

Now, I have told you the simplest thing in the world. Now, where was the Lord's fellowship in all this? I really don't know other than that He looked in the face of those Pharisees and He remembered the day that they touched Him, and worshiped Him, and gave their lives to Him, and He once knew them. He recognized at that moment that He was full of His Father, as He had been the day they touched Him and He touched them, and that in this moment He was still filled with His Father and His house was safe. Not well ordered at all. If it had been well ordered, it would have matched their house. There was no dust in their house. They obeyed the Sabbath. They did all the right and good things, and He was breaking them right and left, but His house was full, and their well-ordered house was empty. He knew that He was filled, that His house was filled, which is its proper status. Well-ordered is not its proper status. That's its dangerous status. He knew that His house...His internal house...would remain filled to the very last breath He took. He knew that he would see them one day crucify Him because they had a well-ordered and empty house; He just had a full one.

You're going to leave here, and you and I are pretty close to being without excuse. Is that not true? I believe most of you have to say, when you get in your car tomorrow and leave here, that you're better equipped to flood that house with water or to see it flooded with water coming from the floor up. Not from the mouth down particularly; from the floor up. Not something you have to put in, but the Lord. I know that many of you have had an empty house well-ordered for a long time. I want to exhort you as we leave here to start putting something inside that house besides a dust mop.

You know, you can have a house that's full; really, truly full. You got a handle, brothers and sisters. You were given a handle - the God-breathing of Scripture, and tonight you got another handle just as great: a Name to love in the quiet of your inmost being.