THE MESSENGER
DECEMBER 17, 2023

NEWS AND NOTES

Congregational Meeting
January 14, 2024
Our Next Gospel Meeting
March 3-8, 2024
Weekly Bible Studies
Thursday at 2 on Zoom
Times of Service
Sunday
Bible study: 945 AM
Worship: 10:45 AM; 6 PM
Wednesday
Bible study: 7:30 PM
(Immediately followed by a short worship service)
First Friday of Month Singing
January 5
Address and Contact
University Heights Church of Christ
445 Columbia Ave., Lexington, KY 40508
(859) 255-6257
www.uheightschurch.com

FILLING THE SPACE

Last week I was reading in Matthew 12 and came to verses 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."

There are many things in these three verses we could talk about. However, in this past reading I was thinking about the emptiness of the house in Jesus' story. The unclean spirit had been dismissed (in whatever way that happened) before sniffing around its old home again and finding the place completely empty. It brought some friends along and moved back in. The person ended up in an even worse condition than before.

Sin is usually easy to identify in our lives but not always as easily removed. In fact, without real steps taken to prevent its return, removing it from our lives is likely only temporary. For the removal of sin to "stick", it is necessary to replace the bad with something good. In Jesus' illustration, that step had not occurred. As a result, there was no barrier preventing the return of the unclean spirit.

Temptations to sin are legion. Sometimes a particular sin takes strong hold in our life. We recognize it and determine to remove it. This is good. We ask God for forgiveness. That is good, too. For this to be true repentance, however, something needs to go in the newly vacated place where that sin once

Members Needing Our Prayers

Jill Harrison, Joyce Bolton, Rick Small, Benny and Arlena Poynter, Janett Brundige, Rhonda Boyd, Cindy Bradbury, Paul Atkisson

Others Needing Prayer

Maurice Baker, Jeff Padgett, John Thompson, Georgia Patton, Glenda Miller, Alyse Nash, Patty Hill, Janice Parsons, Mark Nickles, Paul and Marrian Lyda

To Our Guests

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resided. If this does not happen, that sin is likely to return with a vengeance.

The goal, as our Lord's illustration shows, is to fill that spot with something good and to erect barriers preventing that sin from finding a place within us once again. Consider the following questions.

Why has that sin been such a problem for me? When have I most often found myself engaging in that sin? Is there a person, place, or circumstance that really brings that temptation to bear? Based upon God's Word, what would be particularly helpful to focus on when that temptation rears its head? What spiritually uplifting actions could I engage in during the times I have most often practiced that sin? Is there a Christian I could confide in and even call when that sin becomes especially tempting to help in the moment?

These are the sort of things we can focus on when we are struggling with an especially difficult temptation. The goal is not to enter a state of spiritual neutrality when that sin has been evicted, but to equip ourselves to keep it out forever. This is at the heart of repentance. Fill the space! Adam Litmer

Elders	Deacons	Evangelist
Troy Antle	Richard Brundige	Adam Litmer
David Collins	Adam Daniels	
Adam Litmer	Marcus Lake	
	Frank Patton	
	Jamie Powell	
	Pat Seabolt	
	James Weatherholt	