

## **Matthew 12: Filling The Empty House**

**Matthew 12:43-45** <sup>43</sup>“Now when the unclean spirit goes out of a man, it passes through waterless places seeking rest, and does not find *it*. <sup>44</sup>Then it says, ‘I will return to my house from which I came’; and when it comes, it finds *it* unoccupied, swept, and put in order. <sup>45</sup>Then it goes and takes along with it seven other spirits more wicked than itself, and they go in and live there; and the last state of that man becomes worse than the first. That is the way it will also be with this evil generation.”

As Jesus passes through, evil departs from Him and people experience a new kind of freedom. But what happens when Jesus leaves?

What is true for a man is true for a generation. Whole generations are living in the last generation’s spiritual shadow without having the substance themselves.

Everything is better for a while- the space is unoccupied, swept clean, put in order. And then darkness returns...

**2 Timothy 3:1-7** But realize this, that in the last days difficult times will come. <sup>2</sup>For men will be lovers of self, lovers of money, boastful, arrogant, revilers, disobedient to parents, ungrateful, unholy, <sup>3</sup>unloving, irreconcilable, malicious gossips, without self-control, brutal, haters of good, <sup>4</sup>treacherous, reckless, conceited, lovers of pleasure rather than lovers of God, <sup>5</sup>holding to a form of godliness, although they have denied its power; Avoid such men as these. <sup>6</sup>For among them are those who enter into households and captivate weak women weighed down with sins, led on by various impulses, <sup>7</sup>always learning and never able to come to the knowledge of the truth.

In a perfect world, Jesus would leave a placeholder- something to keep the darkness from retaking the territory.

**John 14:16-18** <sup>16</sup>I will ask the Father, and He will give you another Helper, that He may be with you forever; <sup>17</sup>*that* is the Spirit of truth, whom the world cannot receive, because it does not see Him or know Him, *but* you know Him because He abides with you and will be in you. <sup>18</sup>“I will not leave you as orphans; I will come to you.

The Holy Spirit is the placeholder! Once the house is cleared, swept, and put in order by faith, the Holy Spirit comes in and fills the space.

**Hebrews 3:6** <sup>6</sup>but Christ *was faithful* as a Son over His house—whose house we are, if we hold fast our confidence and the boast of our hope firm until the end.

**Ephesians 2:22** <sup>22</sup>in whom you also are being built together into a dwelling of God in the Spirit.

**John 14:23** <sup>23</sup>Jesus answered and said to him, “If anyone loves Me, he will keep My word; and My Father will love him, and We will come to him and make Our abode with him.

The light of Jesus makes lasting change in those lives that become homes for the Spirit of God.

Once He comes in, the house has to stay filled! Every room has to be given over to Jesus and the doors kept open.

**Ephesians 3:19** <sup>19</sup>and to know the love of Christ which surpasses knowledge, that you may be filled up to all the fullness of God.

Being filled with the Spirit does not mean you get more of the Spirit; it means the Spirit is getting more of you.

**Ephesians 5:17-19** <sup>17</sup> So then do not be foolish, but understand what the will of the Lord is. <sup>18</sup> And do not get drunk with wine, for that is dissipation, but be filled with the Spirit, <sup>19</sup> speaking to one another in psalms and hymns and spiritual songs, singing and making melody with your heart to the Lord

When a person is drunk with wine, all their faculties are impacted! Their vision, their speech, their reaction times, their pain responses, their emotions, their thinking, their moods- everything!

When a person is filled with the Spirit of God, everything changes: We see everything differently, we speak differently, we obey Jesus differently, we think and feel and respond differently!

The first time a person is filled (surrenders fully to the indwelling Holy Spirit) we call Baptism in the Spirit.

God calls us to be filled, refilled, and to remain filled, calling for deeper surrender and releasing new joys and experiences of His presence.

## **Testimony**

I remember being filled with the baptism of the Holy Ghost on Wednesday, December 17th, 2008. I was 18 years old and a freshman in college, living on campus. I visited a dormmate's church for the second time, after having been water baptized the very first time I visited that Sunday prior, which was completely unplanned! I've been told that I needed to get baptized earlier in my adolescence but never did because I felt like baptism was a scary cultic ritual that I wanted nothing to be a part of. Also I knew it was a sign of profession and commitment to the Christian faith, which I was not ready to fully commit to at that time.

However, I was taught the full gospel that Sunday during service and the importance of water baptism by submersion. Once I fully understood the concept of the gospel and of repentance, I accepted it and went through with the water baptism. That Wednesday night, after visiting my friend's church again for bible study, I accepted the invitation for altar call, not really knowing why I was going to the altar but feeling a need to do so. A few ministers from the church surrounded me. They asked me if I had ever received the gift of the Holy Spirit before. I have heard of the Holy Spirit growing up and believe I had prior encounters with him moving on my heart, but wasn't sure if I was necessarily "filled" with him. The ministers told me the Spirit baptism was a free gift that God gives out to his people — to as many as he calls. They told me if I wanted to be filled, to raise my hands in a symbol of surrender, and ask God to fill me. I did as they advised, lifted my hands, and began to pray, asking to be filled. It felt very awkward and quite frankly, silly, because I wasn't sure what I was actually asking for or how I would know once I received it. The ministers began to tarry with me, by laying hands, interceding in their heavenly tongues and petitioning God to fill me.

In the midst of them praying and speaking in tongues in my ear, patting me on my back almost as if trying to burp me, and pressing down on my stomach, commanding "rivers of living water to flow", I had a personal encounter with God. It's as if all the distractions went silent and blurry around me, and I had a one on one with Him. I heard God speak to me. One of the rare encounters during that time of my life, where I actually heard God's voice. Infiltrating my thoughts, it's as if He was speaking directly to my mind. He said, "I desire to fill you with my Spirit, but I will not fill you until you forgive your ex girlfriend for cheating on you."

Immediately, I had a flashback from maybe a year or two prior when my girlfriend called me to confess that she had cheated on me. Upon hearing her confession, the spirit of offense, bitterness, unforgiveness and hatred immediately filled my heart.

God said, "I will not fill you until you forgive her." The spirit of pride began to manifest. I felt myself getting angry at even the thought of forgiveness. I told God, "I'll forgive her. But I will NEVER forget." God responded, "Until you forget, you have not truly forgiven. True forgiveness holds no record of wrong."

The moment I heard that, my eyes were spiritually opened and I came to the revelation that my unforgiveness was keeping both my ex in bondage to guilt and myself in bondage to offense and sin. I then humbled myself and told God, "Ok. I forgive her. I forgive AND forget." Love and compassion was then poured into my heart.

Immediately, I felt what seemed like fire fall upon me; my entire body felt consumed and tingly. I started crying, praising God and speaking in a heavenly tongue. I started jumping up and down, then took off running through the church as if I were on fire and trying to extinguish it. I remember falling on the floor in exhaustion, and screaming at the top of my lungs, as all the evil spirits attached to unforgiveness began to come off of me. I don't know how long I was on that floor crying and screaming and getting delivered, but the moment I got up, I felt empty, but also filled. I knew I was a new creature and had been born again.