

Luke 11:25

Authorized King James Version (KJV)

And when he cometh, he findeth it swept and garnished.

Analysis

And when he cometh, he findeth it swept and garnished. The returning demon discovers the formerly occupied person in a condition that is both promising and perilous. "Swept" (σεσαρωμένον, sesarōmenon, perfect participle) indicates thorough cleaning—past action with continuing result. "Garnished" (κεκοσμημένον, kekosmēmenon, perfect participle from κοσμέω, kosmeō) means decorated, adorned, put in order. The house is immaculately clean and beautifully arranged but fatally empty.

The image portrays religious reformation without regeneration: moral improvement, ethical behavior, perhaps even religious activity—but no indwelling Spirit, no vital union with Christ. The person is like the Pharisees—outwardly clean (Matthew 23:25-28) but inwardly vacant of God's presence. This condition is more dangerous than the original state because it creates false security. The reformed sinner believes himself safe when he's actually defenseless. True salvation requires not just emptying the life of sin but filling it with Christ through the Holy Spirit (Romans 8:9, Colossians 1:27).

Historical Context

The imagery of a swept and decorated house would resonate with Jesus' audience familiar with household maintenance and the cultural emphasis on cleanliness and order. However, the religious application targets Jewish confidence in external righteousness. Many Pharisees pursued meticulous law-observance, ritual purity, and moral discipline—the house was 'swept and garnished'—but lacked genuine

relationship with God. Jesus repeatedly confronted this external religion devoid of internal transformation (Matthew 23, John 5:39-40).

Related Passages

1 John 4:8 — God is love

1 Corinthians 13:4 — Characteristics of love

Study Questions

1. What does a 'swept and garnished' but empty spiritual life look like in contemporary Christianity?
2. How does this passage challenge the assumption that moral improvement equals spiritual transformation?
3. In what ways must the Christian life be not merely emptied of evil but actively filled with Christ and the Spirit?

Interlinear Text

καὶ	ἐλθὼν	εὕρίσκει	σεσαρωμένον	καὶ	κεκοσμημένον
And	when he cometh	he findeth	it swept	And	garnished
G2532	G2064	G2147	G4563	G2532	G2885

Additional Cross-References

Psalms 36:3 (Parallel theme): The words of his mouth are iniquity and deceit: he hath left off to be wise, and to do good.

Psalms 125:5 (Parallel theme): As for such as turn aside unto their crooked ways, the LORD shall lead them forth with the workers of iniquity: but peace shall be upon Israel.