**7/13/25 Why Being Good is Not Enough! Matthew 12:43-45**

* In life, many only focus on their outside appearance and neglect their spiritual life.
* Paul was a good example of having achieved the best that man has to offer, but he counted it as nothing compared to gaining a relationship with Christ.
* If you try to clean up your life, with self righteousness and religious activity you will only make yourself worse. **Philippians 3:7-9; 2 Peter 2:20-22**

**1. Jesus refused to patronize His critics.**

* The religious leaders tried to conceal their unbelief by asking Jesus misleading questions.
* Parables hide the true meaning of the message from unbelievers.
* If Jesus had answered the religious leaders’ questions, He would have catered to their unbelief and allowed them to set the standards for determining faith.
* God would sometimes grant a sign to confirm the faith of believers, such as Abraham, Gideon, Hezekiah and Moses, but would deny a sign to unbelievers that demanded one.

**Matthew 12:39-42; Genesis 15:1-17; Judges 6; 2 Kings 20:1-11; Exodus 4:1-17**

**2. Hearing does not always result in understanding.**

* Several of the Old Testament Prophets shared God’s Word to the people without success.
* Jesus let the people know that someone greater than Jonah and Solomon is with them now, and they still refused to listen and repent.
* Jesus’ parable was applicable to all those who hear the Word of God, and are in part reformed, but not truly converted.

**2 Chronicles 9:1-12; Acts 2-7; Matthew 13:12-13**

**3. Reformation without inward regeneration.**

* Sometimes an evil spirit will leave a person for a little while and seek a place to rest but does not find rest, so it returns.
* The empty, swept and clean house represented the Nation of Israel that had been swept by the teaching of John the Baptist and of Jesus.
* Striving “to be good” on your own without Jesus making a difference in your life is never effective. Old behaviors will soon return.
* Without submission to the Lord and the presence of the Holy Spirit to fill the void, you are simply susceptible to greater demonic influence.

**Matthew 12:43-45**

**Upcoming Events**

Women’s Ministry Planning Zoom Meeting, Monday, July 21, 7 PM; First Women’s Ministry Meeting, Saturday, August 16th, 10 AM, in the Fellowship Hall.

The Food Pantry will be open on Thursday, July 24 from 3-5 PM.

The City of Valdosta Community Back to School Block Party, Saturday, July 26th,  8:30 AM - 1 PM, Unity Park Amphitheater, 301 E. Central Avenue.  Free haircuts, free food, and free school supplies.

The SGMBA Zoom Christian Leadership School classes:  Dr. Joe Troope, **Spiritual Warfare**, Tuesdays and Thursdays from September 4th-18th.  Book:  What You Need to Know About Spiritual Warfare by Max Anders.

Minister Joice Rainge, **Christianity and Contemporary Issues**, September 22nd-26th, M-F, Book: Christianity in the 21st Century by Robert Wuthnow.

All classes will be from 6-8 PM.  Registration is now open and will close on Friday, August 22.  If you need assistance with registration, please contact Dea. Greg Battles.

Men’s Day, Sunday, August 10th, Guest Speaker, Dr. Samuel Clemons, Sr.  of Pleasant Temple Baptist Church.

Special Election Democratic Runoff, Tuesday, July 15th, Mt. Calvary, 7 AM- 7 PM.

**Thought for the Week:** Relying on your own knowledge and strength, robs you of the blessings that come from following God.