

Pk's Perspectives ... Be Attentive and Diligent

I was reading an article a couple of days ago. I want to share an edited portion of the story written by Andrew Miller:

A Chicago woman said a squatter with a long criminal history has taken over her dead mother's home and has refused to leave since September. Darthula Young told CBS Chicago this week that she received a call from neighbors in September that there had been a shooting inside the Chatham neighborhood home that her mother had left to the family after she died. When Young arrived at the home, the locks had been changed and there was a bullet hole in the front window, she told the outlet.

"The person who had been shot in the apartment – this guy named Takito Murray - came back from the hospital, and informed us and the police that he now lived there, that he had rights – he was professional squatter," Young said. Murray claims he is planning on leaving sometime in April or May, but Young said he routinely claims to be leaving soon and then stays put. "Every time I've been there, he tells me he's leaving in two weeks," Young said. "He's leaving in two weeks. He just cannot find a place."

"So you acknowledge that it was her mom's building – that her mom owned it?" reporter Charlie De Mar asked Murray. "Yes, I guess I acknowledge – her mom and her siblings, that was their building," Murray responded. He said he is renting the property from one of Young's siblings but could not provide proof. Young said the city has not shut off the water since someone is technically living there, and she is on the hook for a \$1,300 bill.

This story was part of a larger article addressing the growing conundrum of squatters in our nation. A squatter is an individual or group of individuals that take up residence in a home, building or piece of land, with the intention of permanently using the property without any legal permission from the property's owner. Protecting against squatters and trespassers comes down to attentiveness and diligence from the part of the property owner or the property manager. Leaving a property unattended and without regular maintenance for a long period of time can be a red flag for a potential squatter that the property is vacant, thus increasing the chances of a squatter situation. Having a regular maintenance schedule can not only keep the property in pristine condition, but it can also help deter a trespasser or squatter from taking up residence. A defiant squatter needs to be handled by the court system, and the case is considered a civil matter.

In reading this article, I couldn't help but notice the parallels with Jesus' words in Luke 11: "When an impure spirit comes out of a person, it goes through arid places seeking rest and does not find it. Then it says, 'I will return to the house I left.' When it arrives, it finds the house swept clean and put in order. Then it goes and takes seven other spirits more wicked than itself, and they go in and live there. And the final condition of that person is worse than the first." Maybe it would be wise for us to be attentive and diligent about not only keeping our hearts clean through confession and repentance, but also saturating our hearts with God's Word so that Satan (the ultimate squatter) has no occasion to establish strongholds in our hearts and minds. Grace & peace, love you. PK