

Weekly Study of Sunday's Message.

Sunday January 16, 2021. "Reset: the work of decluttering"

I Intro.

Welcome to the weekly devotional that gives you some specific things to work through from the message this Sunday. Whether you were able to participate in this service or not, this devotion is free-standing and you can still use it to help you dig deeper into your own spiritual walk. We're now in 2022, a brand new year, and we're excited about where God is leading us. In fact, we're meeting on Tuesday nights for an intentional time of focused prayer. A great group of familiar and new faces join us each Sunday. Our children's area is expanding and we are retooling our student ministry. You can check that out through our socials. We're so encouraged by your love and presence when you gather with us. If you're still joining us online, we love and so appreciate your presence also. We are 100% committed to our virtual attenders. We are your church family, and if there is ANYTHING you need, prayer, ideas or suggestions, please pass them our way. We know the future is still uncertain, but we are committed to making our virtual congregation as central to NCC as our in person group.

II Recap.

The first two Sundays of this series had an incredible amount of information, material. We walked through unpacking a lot of scripture...really too much to completely cover. So, we'll be as brief as possible. But if you want a more thorough recap, go back and check last week's message and devotional. Our basic premise for this "**Reset**" series is to take advantage of a new year, and do some intentional and helpful inner work to help us live the life we were made for. This requires us understanding the things that are barriers, inhibit us, and how they actually affect us. And ask; what are we willing to, and can, do in order to do an actual "reset". Then last week we talked about our purpose, and if we can understand how we were designed, what we were made for, then we can live a life that has more impact, feels fuller and more meaningful. Actually the life we were made for. There's a lot of info in those first two Sundays, so go back and watch and read it to get the full effect.

III Sunday.

So, now, onto the work of...'decluttering'. But obviously first some centering questions.

Do you lean more towards saving stuff or living minimally?

Do you live with someone who tends to be opposite from you?

Has that created some tension? How do you deal with it?

In our walking through the work of doing a "reset" or reformatting of our lives for 2022, we now land on decluttering. This is one of the most essential tasks we can take on to help us live the life we were made for. We all have accumulated unnecessary things along our life that slow us down, take up space and keep us from growing. Old obsolete beliefs, assumptions, practices, and more that we either consciously are aware of but haven't had the desire to root through and let go,. Or they hide outside of our awareness in our subconscious, but still affect how we live. So this work of decluttering is difficult, continual, and requires a lot of brutal honesty.

But first, scripture. Again we used a good bit of scripture, and we'll use the first one as a jumping off point, and then the second one to help give us a template of different categories of clutter we can accumulate. So read this first passage, **Hebrews 12:1-3**.

What jumped out to you about this passage?

How do you read and understand it in the light of the work of decluttering?

Now read **Colossians 3:5-11**, but in this light. Don't get bogged down in the specific descriptions of individual sins listed. This is not a list but the sins mentioned are just examples of a bigger truth. We ALL tend to overemphasize the sins we don't struggle with, and gloss over the ones we won't even admit to ourselves. So, look at the larger, overarching descriptions of 'sin', and then we'll hit some categories of things that hinder as well as we can after this passage.

What jumped out to you about this passage?

What larger categories, groups, of personal behaviors did you notice in this passage?

This list is not exhaustive, but some categories of sin-like clutter we let into our daily lives.'

1. Personal temptations and addictions. These are different for all of us. What might cause one person to struggle, may not be a struggle for you. So, what might be a hindrance for you in living fully on for God? Money, alcohol, sexual issues, gossip, being online, etc. Paul said "*things and feelings that attract our fancy*". **What are some things you personally struggle with that you have to intentionally create some distance from, because you don't have the maturity to handle them?**

2. Personality struggles. This one hits a little closer to home. **Has anyone ever told you that you might have an _____ issue?** Anger, impatience, not following through, judgmental, lack of discipline, taking advantage of others, etc. We all have personality issues and struggles that inhibit our ability to grow. I have also found our greatest strengths used to an excess, selfishly, or just unaware, can be our greatest flaw. Not addressing these issues will definitely affect the quality of a "reset". **What are some things you are discovering about yourself, that clutter your life, relationship with God and others, and need to work to rid yourself of them, lessen them in a way to reduce their influence?**

3. How you view, treat, label other people. Paul pulls no punches here. Stop identifying and valuing others using yourself as the center of what is right. Since, this world desperately needs a "reset" in becoming more unified, it has to begin with us. And we have to be the first in not labeling people and work towards treating everyone as children of God. Through the eyes of Jesus. **How do people fit into your life...especially ones that are different from you?** We all have circles of people in our lives from our closest friends/family to friends and just acquaintances. To do a real "reset" we have to fight the urge to label and judge people outside of our inner circles.

4. Obsolete things. This is a really interesting category. **What are you holding onto that's outdated, not useful anymore, but you're still hanging onto it?** Again these are things that once

were important, meant something, had a purpose and value, but now you're just dragging around something that is only weighing you down. Beliefs, values, assumptions, even past truths. To do a real, meaningful "reset" for 2022, you've got to sift through old things to see if they're still useful and meaningful, helping you experience God, or just hindering you and holding you back.

5. Things that divide. We have to live lives with boundaries. Some of the worst and most damaging harm will come from toxic, dangerous people you have not built safe boundaries with. However, sometimes we build boundaries that turn into impenetrable walls, we use to judge and look down on others. Jesus gives us the most amazing teaching about dealing with conflict between two people. Matthew 18 says if you have division between you and someone else, go to them by yourself and try to work it out. If that doesn't work then bring a friend to help facilitate the restoration. If that doesn't work then bring in an unbiased third party to hear both sides and to help point out some things both of you may be missing. If none of those work, then treat them like a pagan, a non-believer. This is where we mess up. We think we're supposed to hold accountable or judge those people. Paul in 1 Corinthians 5 said we're not to hold them to the same standards we're holding ourselves to.

How do we treat people that hurt, harm, or are different from us?

Where are you drawing lines that have become hindrances in you experiencing God?

So, what do we do after we've exhausted all methods to heal the divide? We LOVE them as Jesus did. Now that may mean from a distance, with some healthy boundaries in place. but we actively love them. This is an essential "reset".

IV Challenge.

This was an extra long devotion because...well because we fill our lives with so much clutter. And clutter just weighs us down, distracts, takes up space, pushes God away, and keeps us from "*running with endurance*".

Decluttering is hard work and tends to be one of the most difficult and emotionally exhausting parts of doing a good "reset" because it requires us to do some intentional serious inner work. You will be going through some things you've been consciously or even unconsciously holding onto for a really long time. And having your soul, spirit, cluttered up with old things take up space that God wants to fill with new and fresh experiences and truths.

But it also challenges us to deal with some demons, skeletons, collections of unhelpful things, that we don't want to have to face, or we don't want to expend the emotional energy to rifle through. I'll be REAL honest. This is not for the faint of heart. You have to be willing to put your big boy/girl pants on, ("*gird your loins*" as God told Job) to root these things out, name them, and begin to deal with them.

But...if you don't do this, then all of the other things you do for a "reset" won't matter at all.

And it's this specific work that will power, be a catalyst for, really more than any other project you could take on. This work is important!!

Where could you start that first step towards decluttering your life and spirit?