

Uncluttered Series – Part 1

Prioritizing God's Purposes

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Pastor Brian Flewelling

Intro:

Good morning Petra family. It's great to be with you again in these highly unusual times. And these are highly unusual times. **Uncluttered (promo)**. Oct 2019. There's no way we could have forecasted that the Lord could hijack the evil global pandemic and use it for His purposes – for many of us He has uncluttered our calendars, our businesses, our ministries, so much of the way that we do things. It was unforeseeable.

What does it mean to unclutter?

- i.e. My children's closet. – Content & Chaos in holy matrimony = clutter.
- Clutter is when something good lacks purpose and place.
- Crowds can create clutter. Sometimes Jesus sent the crowds away.
- Sometimes what we've done before stands in the way of what God wants to do...
- Personalities, programs, sacred services or products
- **2 Kings 18:2-5**
The bronze snake was a life-saving strategic answer to prayer God had given to a particular generation. (read about it in Numbers 21)
- The problem is -- we start trusting in the solution instead of the God of solutions.
- We start looking to the answer, but the answer starts to take on a life of its own. (we're paying someone to maintain it, clean it, repair it, to promote it...)
- 600 years later we're still looking to the answer to an old problem that has already been solved. And we need new answers to new difficulties that we haven't solved yet.
- There are seasons when God allows our structures to be smashed to pieces so that God can provide a new solution to problems.
- Sometimes the right things get lost in the clutter.
- In 2 Kings 22:8 we see how, the one thing they needed to prioritize (the law of the Lord) got lost in the busyness of temple life.
- In the busyness of doing good things for the Lord we can lose the most important thing...

Something is different about this Global shutdown? God is up to something. What is He doing? I haven't put my finger on it, none of us have. There's a dynamic in which He is forcing us to depend on him, to stop and listen. It's like we're hitting reset.

I know many of us are tired of hearing about the virus. Many of us are ready to get back to life as normal (if you and I were ever normal, we'd like to get back to that). But I don't know if there is a "going back."

Spiritual Observations

But we can make a few spiritual observations that may or may not be obvious to everyone...

- Last week we literally just celebrated Easter/Passover.
- There was a global plague of death passing over the nations of the earth during the time of Passover.
- Last week for the first time in human history, thanks to Zoom, believers around the globe celebrated a Passover communion in their homes all together at the exact same time. Declaring that Jesus (our Passover lamb) reigns over the spirit of death, disease, over sin and darkness...
- I'm not a prophet, or the son of a prophet. I work for a non-profit organization.
- You have to be asking yourself the question, "God, what are you doing?"
- **Passover** was not the end; it was the beginning. It was Independence Day. It was the beginning of the Jewish new year. It was the beginning of a new thing that God was doing. It was the beginning of resurrection life in Jesus Christ.
- [Isaiah 43:19](#) "See, I am doing a new thing. Now it springs up; do you not perceive it? I am making a way in the wilderness..."

In the weeks after Easter, how did the disciples posture themselves in their season of disappointment and shutdown?

- They weren't just playing candy crush and checking Instagram feed.
- They maintained a spirit of prayerful anticipation.
- 50th day on the Pentecost (Shavuot)--Harvest time for the farmers. Most of the people were out in the fields swinging the scythes gathering their winter crops.
- It was harvest time for the Church. Because of the outpouring of the Holy Spirit's power, thousands of people were coming to salvation from every language (Pentecost).
- One of the prophetic words that we've been hearing over and over, is that a great harvest is coming!
- What if God does not want us to look back? What if this is the season to hit reset so we can get our house in order so that He can expand what He is doing?
- The farmer does not wait until harvest time to service his equipment. He gets his equipment ready to go so that when harvest comes, he is in the field from 5 a.m. to 10 p.m.

Let's take a step even further back.

Exodus 7:16 (God tells Moses to tell Pharaoh)

'The Lord, the God of the Hebrews, has sent me to say to you: Let my people go, so that they may worship me in the wilderness. But until now you have not listened.

Word for "worship" is the word to "Work." (He says it 6 times more).

- Pharaoh's been keeping them in bondage to his busyness.
- You will be a kingdom of priests, a holy nation—An entire nation dedicated to the service of God among all the other nations.

Jesus said it this way, "About my Father's...it was necessary for me to be."

Matthew 20:1

"For the kingdom of heaven is like a landowner who went out early in the morning to hire workers for his vineyard."

Matthew 9:37-38

Jesus tells his disciples, "The harvest is plentiful but the workers are few. ³⁸ Ask the Lord of the harvest, therefore, to send out workers into his harvest field."

We haven't been in a harvest season; we haven't seen a harvest season in North America in over 40 years. So, we haven't needed to be on high alert. But if our discernment is accurate, it seems the Lord is saying simply. Get yourself ready to be labors in the harvest field.

This shutdown won't last forever. What is our plan for reentry?

6 Actions steps to posture ourselves well before the Lord.

1. **Unclutter.** Hold every activity up before the Lord and ask Him, "Is this the right season for this hobby, commitment, ministry, this fun thing?" Just because we can do something, it doesn't mean we should do it.
 - "Everything in our life is going to be uprooted or planted deeper."

III: Flower bed. What stays and what goes?

- Maybe we're not going to be a three-sport family anymore.
- Maybe we're not going to be a seventeen-ministry church anymore. I don't know.
- The Lord wants to breathe new life into something we've been doing for 17 years.
- Cut out the extra voices of media, the superfluous activities. —Maybe not indefinitely, but could we do it for six months?
- Too many voices crowd out the one voice that matters, and that's the commanding officer in charge.
- In a machine it's not about how many pieces are moving. It's about making sure that every piece that's moving has a purpose.

2. **Look ahead, don't look back.** Things are changing. Don't long for the good old days. It's ok to emotionally grieve things you may have lost. And we absolutely celebrate the

testimonies of what God has done. But set your heart on pilgrimage. Draw strength from God's creativity in this season. He's doing new things.

3. **Prepare yourself for difficulties.** It may keep getting harder. One of the first places the Israelites came to after Passover was a stream of undrinkable water. They thought they had reached a place to rest. Their disillusionment exposed their false hopes and false comforts. Economists are predicting this shutdown will impact jobs and the economy for much more than twelve months.
4. **Get familiar with the Lord's work in prayer.** On Mount Carmel Elijah prayed 7 times for rain until the rain came. We have to become familiar enough with the Lord's presence to know the difference between:
 - unanswered prayer because we are asking the wrong things
 - unanswered prayer because God is answering it in different ways
 - unanswered prayer that we have to press through. Like a running back drives through his tacklers until he gets that ball across the endzone line.
5. **Focus on families.** God is a Father. At the center of His passion for revival, He wants healthy, loving families. Moses numbered the people by family and tribe. Family and personal identity are the front lines of the battle in our generation. True religion is for Jesus to stand between me and my spouse. Everything we say and do, passes through him first, to our children.
6. **Be prepared to network with other believers.** Christian community isn't just so that we can have fun together with other safe people who understand how weird we are. It's so that we can join together in building God's kingdom in action and in prayer.

My conclusions:

It could very well be that God is decluttering the Church of sin, and structures, and commitments, and false dreams, distractions. He's asking us to be vigilant in prayer and position ourselves to be ready to help out with the global harvest.

Closing Prayer:

I do a new thing...

New prophetic destiny.

Salvation

Creativity

Business